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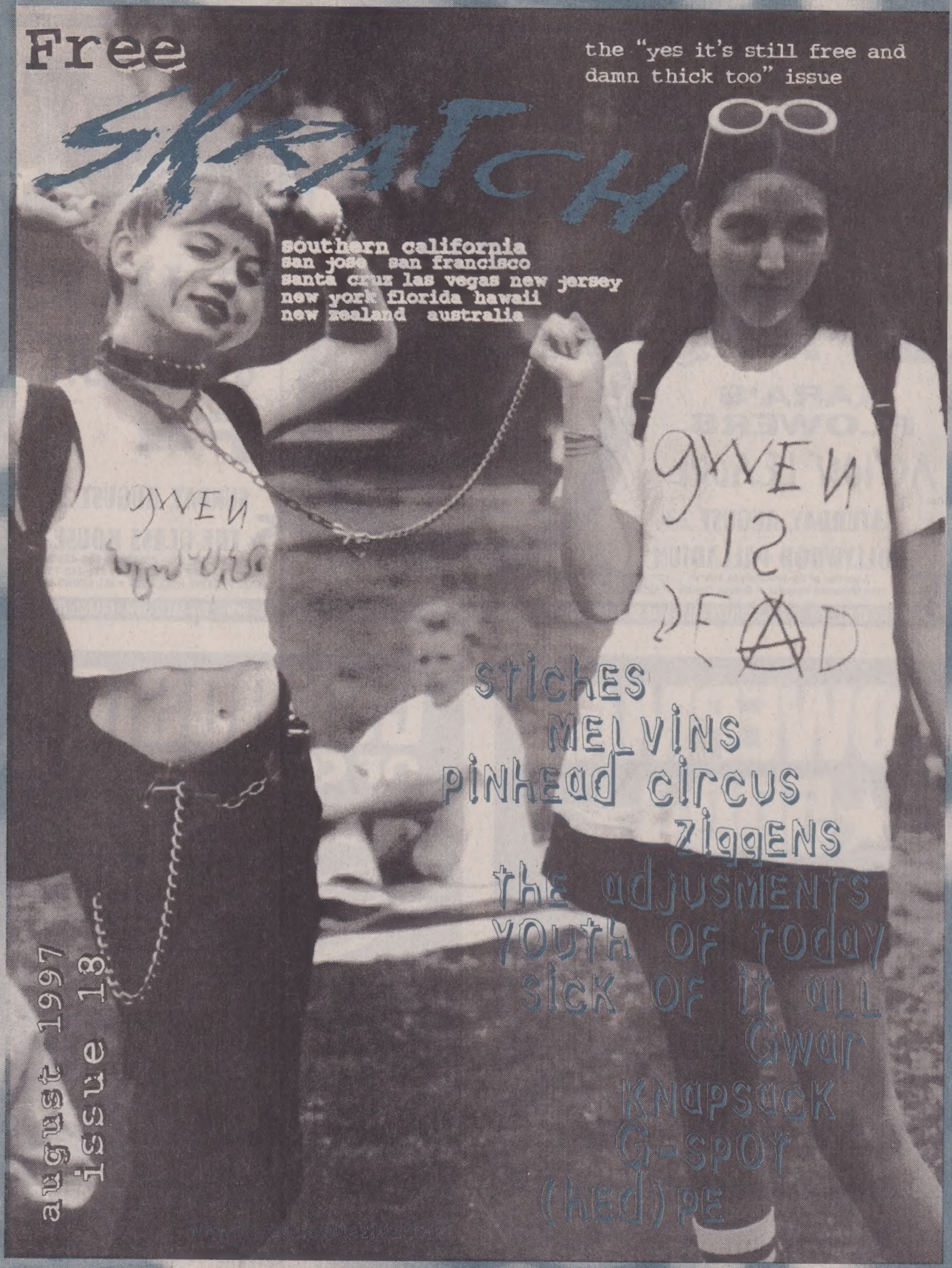

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august 1997
issue 18

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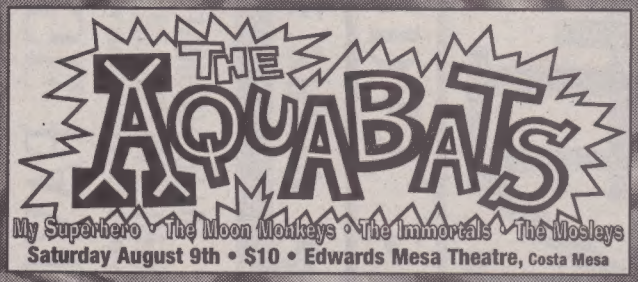

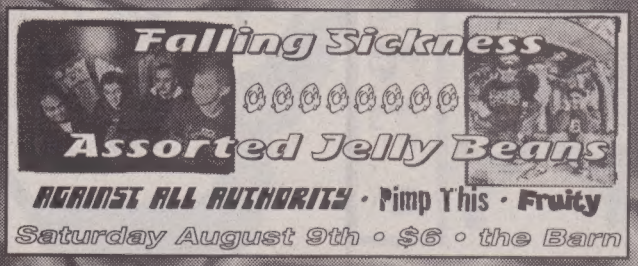

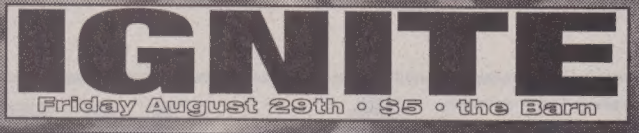

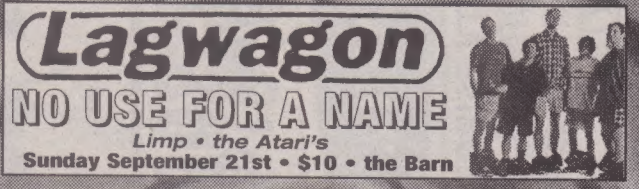

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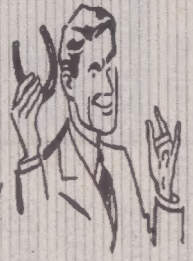

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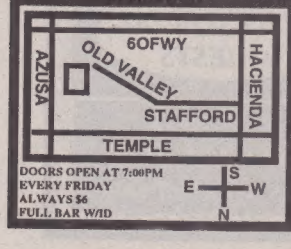

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WED. AUG 20 — MURPHY'S LAW — YOUTH BRIGADE, CAUSE FOR ALARM

THURS. AUG. 21 — FATES WARNING, INATIMATE, THE FALLEN — WHITE TRASH WONDERLAND

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FRI. AUG. 29 — GOOBER PATROL, diesel boy, the NOBODYS — PATCH * HANGAR 18

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special thanks to the loyal No Doubt fans and Ella for shooting it.

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Send all crap to:

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Ad Deadline: every 1st of the month.

No, we're not selling this piece of shit! You can quit your whining already-you little babies. Bet you wanted that Lickmydong record, didn't ya? If you haven't noticed this is the fattest issue to date- 76 pages full of hoopla, nonsense, and garbage. Keep reading kiddies. And uh, the cover doesn't mean we hate No Doubt- it's just two innocent kids fighting for the freedom of speech and we gave it to them. Check out our website www.skratchmagazine.com

SOME SHIT IN OUR MAILBOX

To whom it may corncern:

After gathering amongst other members of the patrol, we have come to the corncluslon that Dan and Snott are definitely fags! Cornholers.

-Korn the King
(This has nothing to do with the band)

Reply to Baby Lamb:

Now being a writer, I know that I'm supposed to take criticism with a grain of salt. Fuck that. Ignorance breeds, so I believe you have to put a stop to it before it spreads. Now I know I sound bitter. Well, I am when some ignorant person sends a letter to the SKRATCH headquarters about me calling me a fuckhead about me saying Mr. Liberation slammed Homegrown in his fanzine, Big Bang. Of course, Homegrown has released records on Liberation Records. So what? Hey, wussy lamb, read issue #1 of Big Bang fanzine. Then proceed to never write unless you know the facts. And, since you didn't have enough balls or guts to write directly to me or even include your real name, just don't write anymore.

On the other hand, I would like to thank Rick and Chris from Nitro, R.H., Isella R., Liza A., and Joey from the Rule of Nine for writing me. Peace with the bomb.

-Frank Cardoza

SKRATCH,

I've always heard people say that punk is dead; now I clearly understand why. The past two issues have been a slap in the pierced face of the scene. If the P.M.R.C. was still around, they would have a field day with this. With the last issue cover (#16) having some blond dicktease running down the beach naked, and trying to add sick humor to it by showing some fat fuck (who I thought was my friend, Evil, at first) doing the same on the next one. I feel embarrassed to read it on the bus for fear of having someone think I'm reading a cheap porno. And the kids in Orange County, what the fuck is up with that?! I wish I could to afford to hang out in a multinational, capitalistic, fascist, religion-supporting conglomerate like that and bitch about the security guard ordering me to take my safety pins off, because I was too lazy to sew my patches on. If this is punk, then count me out. These suburban jerkoffs wouldn't know punk if De De Troit handed them a pamphlet. Would these kids write back after Disney bought out their parent's property in order to expand their "hangout"? The rest of your mag has the same stodgy, generic interview topics that have as much profound meaning as a Pat Buchanan speech. The club listings are all right, that is if I wanted to pay ten bucks to get beat up by Drain Bramaged jocks and have an argument with the bouncer. I think it's time to cleanse the scene from the stupid people who waste our time talking about the same shit that we should boycott and stop giving money to cunts who cash in our scene. And pa-leez stop praising bands that make Snoop Dogg sound like Peter Kropotkin (a very intellectually aware anarchist from the 19th century). To me, the scene has always been about standing up for your own beliefs, fighting for what is truly right, and bringing about a social change, revolution, and unity, no matter what our differences are. When we become forgetful of where we came from and begin to fight and knit-pick about the meagerest things, then we might as well bend over, spread our legs and enjoy what we're doing to each other.

-Spam Gerber
$2.95?! You gotta be shitting me!

TO: Patrick Seick

In response to your letter in the July issue of Skratch, dude you are fucking clueless I know you don't know shit. You're probably 16 or 17, at an all ages club drinking YooHoo. I don't think you know shit about straight edge because my past experiences at straight edge shows are a bunch of youngsters acting like their cool and shit, staring at me cause I'm smoking a cigarette. You know you're a hypocrite, you're a vegan but you wear leather skateboarding shoes and eat eggs in pancakes that your mamma made you. I think you should read the Ten Yard Fight review a second time, because I did a funny and accurate review, not a bag. Next time you feel cool remember I know you're a lame duck. I'll eat a burger for you and you can feel guilty, because I'm eating it for you. And "peace out" is just as stupid as scratching anarchy signs or wearing an X on your hand. Wearing an X on your hand came from when you weren't old enough to drink, the club would put an X on you hand so you couldn't buy drinks. But you probably knew that cause you're so cool.

Later Rookie
Bruce Kolberg

Scott,
Is that you on the cover of your last issue, cause I have a sister you gotta meet.

-Jay
Soda Jerk records

POSTCARD FROM BOURBON STREET:
Thought you'd like this thrashy card. Hope its thrashy enough for you!! New Orleans needs SKRATCH!! Give my best to everyone and remember PUNKS CAN READ TOO!!

signed,
(name unrecognizable)

A Scene United?
A Scene Divided?
A Scene Forgets Its History?

Being 21, I sometimes feel like a teenager. But other times I feel as though I'm an elder. Point in case -- when I started to listen to punk music, it all had meaning. The pure anarchy of Crass and the Exploited, or the sheer onslaught of Black Flag. The political satire of the Dead Kennedys and MDC, or the society outlook of Bad Religion. Yeah, I know Bad Religion is still around, but how many remember "Drastic Actions" or "Do What You Want"?

Has any of you kids seen the punk classic "Suburbia"? Not the Richard Linklater movie. The one with a young man named Michael Balzavy (aka Flea). A movie about living out the punk lifestyle to the extreme.

Nowadays, everyone loves bands like Millencolin, Homegrown, Assorted Jellybeans and 22 Jacks. Although these are four great bands, none of them has yet to write a "Holiday in Cambodia" or "Nervous Breakdown." And as far as ska goes - great to dance to, but I have yet to hear anyone taking up where Operation Ivy left off.

What's the point of this rant? When I see 15 and 16 year old kids with MDC or Crass patches on their jackets, I wonder if they even know what MDC stands for. Or if they know about the severe anti-commercialism stance of Crass. I doubt it. So the point is, do not forget punk's history. Pick up a copy of Maximum Rock n Roll or Punk Planet or even Suburban Voice and read them. Support the scene by shopping at the mom and pop stores. Don't step into Blockbuster Music or the Wherehouse. And do not even look at Sam Goody's. Only go to Tower for buying zines and mainstream records. Otherwise, buy from indie stores or even mail order catalogs.

Well, thanks to everyone who responded to my last article (even you, Baby Lamb). Peace.

Frank Cardoza
5014 Hayter Avenue
Lakewood, CA 90712

P.S. Glossary:
mom and pop stores - stores that specialize in underground and local music
zines -SKRATCH, Punk Planet, MMR
mail order catalogs - look at the ads for catalog cost
indie stores - see #1

Hey SKRATCH,

I was reading the May 1997 issue and I figured it was a good idea to tell ya that this mag Kicks ass expecially the 'Fuck San Diego" Article because it is entirely true.

Keep up the good work
John Swartz
Vista, CA

~~You're too punk rock to write us, huh?~~

Don't worry if you can't spell. Topic sentences? Proper grammar? Fuck it. We'll fix it. Write us and speak your mind and if you don't have one, speak someone elses.' Send your rants/letters/comments to: SKRATCH LETTERS
1242 Caracas Dr.
Placentia, Ca 92870

Concert Etiquette:

SEVEN WAYS TO MAKE YOUR SHOW-GOING EXPERIENCE A MORE PLEASURABLE ONE.

If you've been to more than three shows in your lifetime, chances are you've been really annoyed with some of the people around you. The following is a list of rules that should help out those of you whose manners are less than perfect.

(1) Imagine, you're in the crowd and your favorite band takes the stage, everyone screams with delight, and the guy in front of you raises his arms victoriously. Only seconds later, you become dizzy and are having flashbacks to the vacation to France your parents made you go on when you were ten. You're going to leave the show smelling; there's no reason to go into it that way. Take a shower before hand, feel free to lather up all the crevices and areas you usually ignore. Go ahead and use a little Old Spice if you're into that, but be careful; standing next to someone who thinks cologne should be poured on can be just as bad as standing next to Frenchie.

(2) When down in the crowd, packed together like European soccer fans, be mindful of bony protuberances, i.e., elbows and knuckles. There's nothing worse than some retard pressing his hamhocks into the small of your back for an hour at a time.

(3) For those of you who smoke, for Christ's sake, watch what the fuck you're doing with that cigarette. Remember it's fire, and it's really hot. I don't know how many times I've been jabbed with some asshole's Camel only to have them go, "oh sorry, did I get you?" "yes, you got me; was it the hole in my face or the fact that I screamed in pain that tipped you off?"

(4) Refrain from yelling out the names of songs you want to hear. Of all the shows and all the bands I've seen, there's only one time the band actually broke from the set list and played what the person was asking for. A few weeks ago, I was at a show, and the asshole next to me kept screaming about some song he wanted to hear. Finally, at the end of the set, the band played it, and the guy looks at me and says, "cool, I got them to play it!" No dick, they were going to play it from the very beginning; you had nothing to do with it. The band is going to play what they're going to play; yelling what you want to hear only pisses off the people around you.

(5) What one wears to a show is of little consequence, but if you're the type that's got a lot of metal spikes, safety pins and such, make sure you're not impaling your neighbor with them. Once my sister got stuck with a pin, and all she did for the next week was bitch that she was going to get tetanus. So if for no other reason than to shut up my neurotic sister, be mindful of your jewelry.

(6) Crowdsurfing - my greatest displeasure. I realize that it's part of the shows, and it's not going away, but the fact is that anybody that weighs over 130 pounds should not be doing it. There's always some disgusting fat body who is using your shoulder as a prop to get on top of the crowd. Sometimes, he'll have the nerve to ask you to help him. Sorry, tons-a-fun, you'll not be dueling gravity over my head, so get away. For those who meet the weight requirement I say this - relax and let the crowd move you around. Don't try to do the funky chicken on top of a bunch of people who don't want you there in the first place. And when you're coming down, just accept it. Struggling to stay up is futile, and you'll end up kicking someone in the face every time.

(7) And finally, a message to all the guys with shaved heads, wearing wife beaters. I know that you can kick my ass. The guy next to me knows that you can kick his ass. Everyone in the crowd knows that you could kick our collective asses. We fear you. Us bad, you good. That being said, you shouldn't have anything left to prove. Go in the pit and be a badass, but just don't start shit with me and the rest of the pussies on the out skirts of the crowd.

The bottom line is that people go to shows to have fun. Not to fight or to be made fun of or stabbed or burned or whatever. So be nice, and next time you light your shirt on fire and throw it into the crowd, think about the poor bastard who used two cans of hair spray getting his mohawk just right, and who it's going to land on.

-Ty Robinson

HOW TO WRITE A BAD REVIEW WITHOUT SOUNDING SO BAD.

1. "Awfully interesting."
2. "Definitely made an impact."
3. "They sound like nothing I've heard before."
4. "They're huge in Japan."
5. "Good songs if You're into DAZZLE."
6. "Perfect to open for Stryper."
7. "They're in a class by themselves."
8. "Well, practice makes perfect."
9. "They must smoke crack."
10. "If they worked harder on their songs, these guys might have something."
11. "Gives bad [70's, 80's, or fill in the blank] flashbacks."
12. "With the proper ingredients, this band will go far."
13. "Their image is stronger than the music."
14. "They know how to play around."
15. "It's one of a kind."
16. "Amazing sleeping aid."
17. "Great graphics on the cd cover."
18. "Not one of the labels' finest bands."
19. "More style to their hair than their music."
20. "There's no telling where these guys will take it next."

-SCOTT PRESANT


photo-Mark Rasmussen

DO NOT CONFUSE MIKE (THE MAN WITH MANY EXPRESSIONS) WITH THE FAMOUS ROD STEWART

THE STITCHES Interview after there drunken show
@ THE TIKI BAR ON JULY 19th

MIKE vocalsJOHNNY W. guitarTED guitarPETER bassJOHNNY S. drums

SK SO WHAT THE FUCK WENT ON HERE TONIGHT?
MIKE We drank a lot.
JOHNNY S. I don't know. Johnny tends to make new friends everywhere he goes.
MIKE Because he's a very friendly person.
SK JEFF AT CLUB MESA SAID THAT YOU GUYS ARE A PAIN IN THE ASS.
JOHNNY S. Who the hell is Jeff?
MIKE Who gives a flying fuck who Jeff is anyway. And you know what, of course where a pain in the ass, cuz if your going to book a band then pay the fucking band what their fucking deserved. And if not then fucking blow me. It has nothing to do with the fact that I'm Jeff from blah, blah, blah, we just show up and all we need is 80 bucks and all the booze we can drink, and if you can't fucking handle that, don't fuck ing book bands.

SK WHO DOES YOUR HAIR BEFORE A SHOW?
JOHNNY S. (starts cracking up)
MIKE I do, I'm the fuck ing man. Basically if I was not a fucking record seller, I'd style a hair and suck a lot of cock.
SK FAVORITE BAND NEW OR OLD?
MIKE Stiffs Incorporated rule, The Prostitutes, their all right their from PA., they can't handle themselves. The Rejectors rule.
JOHNNY W. No Talents from Paris are one of our new favorite bands.
SK How much are The Stitches getting paid tonight?
JOHNNY W. We had a 1000 dollar guarantee but we only got 950, and were kind of pissed.
SK WHO WRITES THE SONGS AND WHAT'S YOUR INSPIRATION?
MIKE Well basically I write all the songs.(the rest of the band just laughs while slapping him upside the head)
JOHNNY W. We all write the songs, next question.
SK HAVE THE STITCHES EVER PLAYED A SOBER SHOW?
(Mike cracks up in laughter)
JOHNNY W. We did one time, we had to go on early at Gilman and we fucking puked all of our alcohol, and we were kind of sober and we sucked worse then when were drunk.
JOHNNY S. We practice drunk so you know we got to play drunk.
SK WHY DON'T YOU GUYS MAKE GIRLS COME ON STAGE AND SHOW THEIR TITS?
JOHNNY S. We can't have that on stage, because were so good look ing that it would draw attention away from us.
MIKE Would you shut up, that's a stupid question.
JOHNNY S. Were not the Stranglers, come on.
SK HEY MIKE, TYRA FROM 4 GASM TOLD ME THAT YOU SWING BOTH WAYS.
MIKE Basically yeah, I'll fuck anything, be a male or female asshole, I don't care as long as they put it up in the air.
SK MIKE, WHAT'S YOUR DRUG OF CHOICE?
MIKE Oh well, that would have to be h.....
JOHNNY W. Next question (the whole band laughs)
JOHNNY S. I'd have to say pot, because you can live without heroin, but you can't live without pot.
SK DO PEOPLE CONFUSE YOU WITH ROD STEWART? (SEE PHOTOS ON NEXT PAGE)
MIKE As a matter of fact, YES.
JOHNNY S. We were signing autographs in Germany at some Turkish bar and everybody thought he was Rod Stewart and he got free drinks the whole day. And they were asking us why does Rod Steward do his laundry across the street at the laundry mat.
SK HOW WAS THE EUROPEAN TOUR?
JOHNNY S. It went fucking great, everybody loved us. We fucking came home with nothing in our pockets and nothing in our stomachs. And a liver full of warm German beer. But besides that, we toured with the No Talents and played with the Jet Bumpers.
SK WHAT COUNTRIES?
JOHNNY S. No Talents are from France and the Jet Bumpers are from Germany.
SK WHAT DO YOU THINK OF CLUB MESA?
JOHNNY S. I think Mike chipped a lot of teeth there. I think it fucking sucks. I think they should hire the fucking nazi's delivering speed out of the bathroom.
MIKE I seriously really really miss the people that would give free speed at Club Mesa, because I love fucking speed, it's genius, just think how good is it to get into a club and have somebody go hey, would you like a pool stick of a line of speed. so you do the line of speed and you come out of the bathroom and whack someone with the pool stick, and then their pissed, well guess what.
SK WHEN DID THE STITCHES START AS A BAND?
MIKE 1993 with various members, basically I'm the only one left out of the fucking bag. So it worked out pretty bad for a while, and after a while I started kicking people out left and right. And then my buddy moved in from Ohio, and I'd figure I'll pull him in but he's got the stiffest right hand, he can't play guitar, he's the biggest pile of shit.
JOHNNY W. And so were great. Mike has the stiffest right lung.

MIKE Yeah, I only have one lung and he's only got one hand.
JOHNNY S. So none of us can play and Mike can't sing.
JOHNNY W. Actually we all play great but Mike can't sing, so were still waiting to kick him out.
SK WHO'S THE BIGGEST FLAKE IN THE BAND?
MIKE Oh, that would have to be me
SK HOW DID YOU GUYS GET START ED WITH THE STRIPES ON YOUR CLOTHES AND LATEST E.P.?
MIKE Oh the stripes, you know what, it's a whole hepatitis thing. I get these weird fucking stripes on my arm, also my liver is like that.

SK WHAT LABEL ARE THE STITCHES ON?
MIKE Mine, we have nothing to do with anybody else, we strictly do it ourselves because of one reason, everybody else can suck my fucking dick.
SK WERE THERE ANY LABELS INTERESTED IN THE STITCHES?
MIKE Yeah, there has been offers galore, but you know what, they can suck my dick as well.
SK ANY PLANS TO PLAY ALL AGES SHOWS?
MIKE Yeah I got a great plan for that, we will never play an all age show, because we don't play without any fucking booze.
SK HOW DOES CHELSEA (MIKE'S GIRLFRIEND) PUT UP WITH YOU?
MIKE Oh my god, well I broke up with her last night because she was socking me in the head on the way home, she got a lit tle pissed off because of the fact. She's got a problem with me driving drunk. You know I was driving, and if I'm driving she gets upset about it. But you know that's typical of a fucking chic, every fucking chic you meet is going to be a little pissed with anything you fucking do. Whether you drive drunk or shot dope, their always going to be pissed. Chic's are a completely dif ferent breed from normal humanity. A girl needs love, a man needs dope.
SK WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADD ANYTHING TO THAT CHELSEA?
CHELSEA No (and just walks away)
SK HOW'S THE RECORD STORE (UNDERDOG) DOING?
MIKE I'm stinking rich.
JOHNNY W. Punk rock made him a wealthy man.
SK ANY NEW RELEASES PLANNED FOR THE FUTURE?
JOHNNY W. Yeah, we got a new album due out in a few months.
MIKE Actually, it's going to be on Beer City records that way we can get our beer and skateboards for free.
JOHNNY W. We got three words-kill me now.

This interview was conducted under the influence of a lot of beer, more on the part of The stitches then me, so if Mike offended anyone out there, I'm sure he did not mean it, but what do I know?

-Dan Gruia

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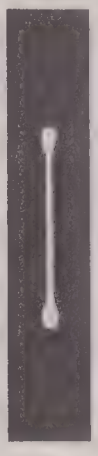
IN STORES AUGUST 12

King Buzzo of the Melvins
Interview by Edward E. Solis
KB- King Buzzo ES- Edward Solis

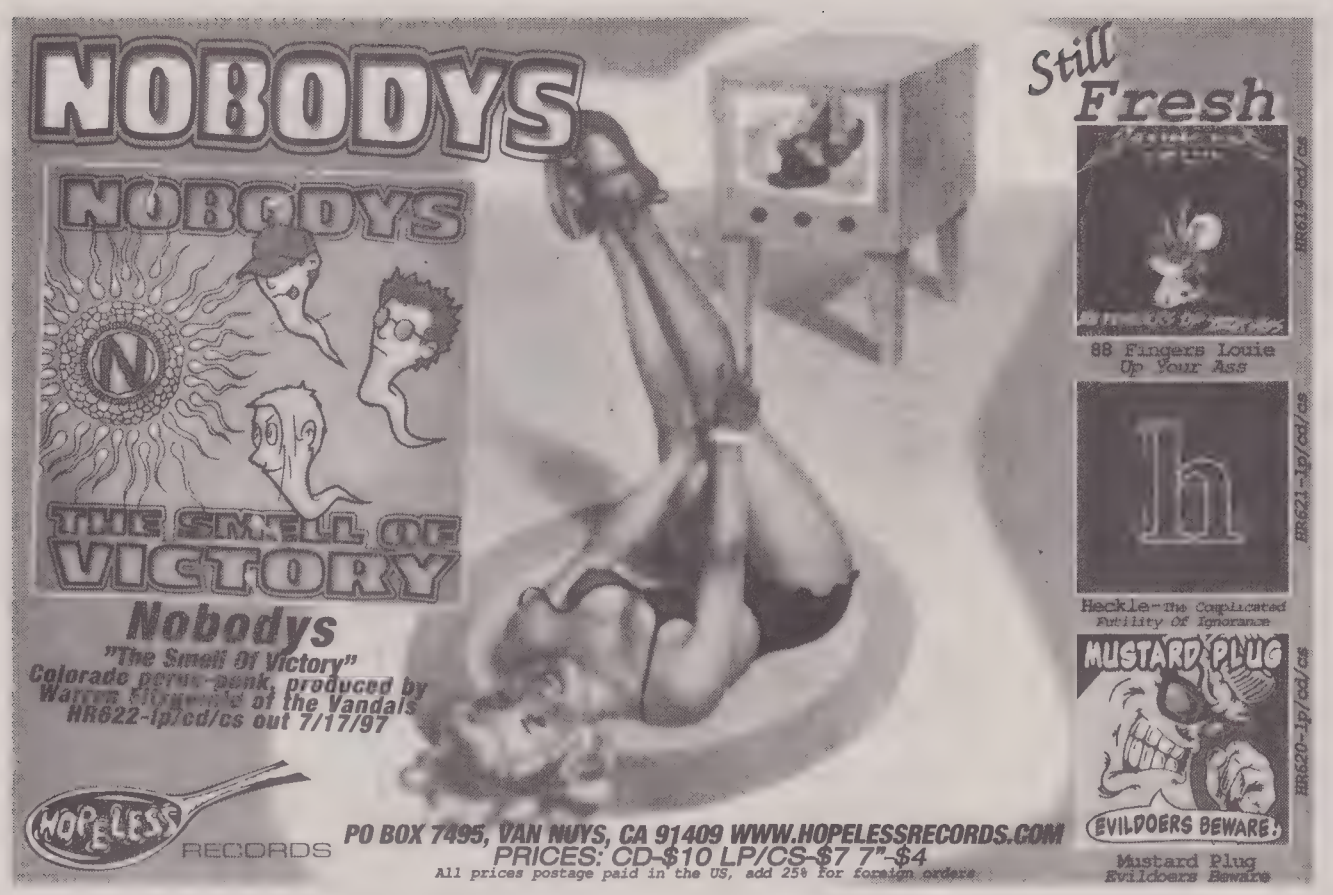
ES: Hey Buzz what's up?
KB: Not much.
ES: You hate doing interviews?
KB: No.
ES: After you guys did the "Stag" album, you toured with KISS and played some clubs. Tell me how it was to play with KISS in make up?
KB: It was the nicest experience opening for KISS.
ES: Were you treated well?
KB: Yes, it was totally positive.
ES: What happened after that, any clubs?
KB: After the KISS tour we jumped on Lollapalooza and did the second stage thing. Then went to Europe and came back and did a three set a night club tour.
ES: Three sets a night wow!
KB: Yeah, we would go out and play our noisy feed back stuff for 60 minutes, then another 60 minutes of the easy vibe. Finally we would end with an hour of pure crunch rock.
ES: Could we talk about the label jump from Atlantic to Reptile?
KB: Yeah, it was the better thing to do at the time. This is a transitional period before jumping to another label. At the moment we are looking for another record deal so we will see what happens.
ES: The new album "Honkey" how long did it take you guys to pull it off?
KB: Six days top to bottom.
ES: How about the writing process what about that?
KB: I don't know.
ES: So you guys wrote this sporadically like on tour?
KB: Yeah we wrote songs here and there, a bunch of material.
ES: Honkey was done in February right?
KB: Yes.
ES: That was recorded here in L.A. right?
KB: Yeah, here in L.A. at Grandmaster Studios.
ES: Did you record it live?
KB: Well, about half of it was recorded live.
ES: What about writing contributions?
KB: It always starts with a small idea. Most of the time I come up with the ideas and we just play around with it. So how did you like the show last night?
ES: Very good. It was the first time I saw you guys, well I saw the Melvins at the F-Fest when you guys did that three hour set. I was only there for fifteen minutes though.
KB: Why were you wasted?
ES: No.
KB: No, why not?
ES: Actually I was running around doing journalism crap.
KB: You mean work.
ES: Tell me about this tour with Helmet.
KB: We have been out together for about a month. We will be out a couple of more weeks then go to Australia, come back, and do three more weeks with Helmet.
ES: How about coming back and headlining some clubs.
KB: I don't know it's hard to say.
ES: How about another album on a different label?
KB: No idea, just taking it as it comes.
ES: Right now in the mainstream do you relater to any of the bands truthfully.
KB: Like who?
ES: Well the MTV/KROQ click. You know 311, Sublime, No Doubt.
KB: I don't know anything about these bands you have to keep giving me names.
ES: Well, you know- the mainstream stuff.
KB: **Well No Doubt, I don't know anything about them. I hear the media call them a punk rock/ska band. From the very little I have heard I could hardly say that they are punk rock. I mean their music is very safe and sounds like crap.**
ES: What about good L.A. bands like Lutefisk?
KB: Well I know those guys but I never heard them or seen them, don't know a whole lot about them.
ES: What new stuff do you like?
KB: The new Braniac record is good but unfortunately the singer is dead. I also dig Skeleton Key.
ES: What do you think about some old school bands returning like the Misfits and Descendants?
KB: I think the Descendants are a bunch of nice guys. I am glad to see they are making money at it because they certainly hardly made any money before. The Misfits, well I hate the Misfits!
ES: What kind of gear do you use?
KB: On stage I'm pretty straight Les Paul Rat pedal.
ES: What's up with all of the electronic stuff like Prodigy and Chemical Bro's?
KB: I have not heard any of it the interest me in the least so I don't know. **But if Prodigy is supposed to be electronic music is supposed to sound like today it sounds like shit and I don't want any part of it.**



ES: What albums have you been listening to besides Braniac.
KB: I have been listening to the Beach Boys "smile" record lately and a lot of Beatles as well.
ES: Do you use this stuff as song writing influence for like vocal patterns and stuff like that?
KB: No, maybe a little.
ES: Any influences at all?
KB: Probably just Braniac.
ES: Are you playing any KISS covers at all this tour?
KB: No, just our stuff. We have our set memorized.
ES: You guy's rehearse the set before you go on tour?

KB: Oh yeah!
ES: Where abouts do you live in Hollywood?
KB: In Hollywood.
ES: Do you like playing in L.A.?
KB: I love it just like anywhere else. I'm one of these people who know a lot of people but have very few friends.
ES: Are you married?
KB: Been married 3 1/2 years. I love it, and it's going great.
ES: Any kids?
KB: No way I hate kids.

I have hated kids since I was a child. But I should actually head in for a sound check. Thank you very much.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I had the chance to chat with John Aquilla the singer of G-spot, and here is what he had to say:

Joe)Who is in G-spot, and what do they play?
John)I am on vocals, Mike Barnes is on the guitar, Jeff Hawthorn plays drums, John Jackson is bass, Dickenson Desandes, and Adam Glow play the trombone. T. Jay Outlaw, and Paul Rendon are on the trumpet and that makes up G-spot.
Joe)Has the line up changed since the band began?
John)The newest players are Dickenson and Paul. Everyone else has been in since the beginning.
Joe)Who started G-spot, and when?
John)John Jackson and I started the band. We used to be called the Fleshies. But we changed the name, because girls did not like it too much. We started out just for fun, and the band just kept going.
Joe)Why did you want to be in a band?
John)When I was fifteen years old, I wanted to play drums really bad. I also looked up to my older brother who played in a band for a summer.
Joe)How is the ska scene in San Diego County?
John)It's booming! When we started out there was just Buck-o-Nine, Insteady and us. Bands keep popping up all over the place.

Joe)I heard you have a new album coming out, tell me a little about it?
John)It's off Immune Records, and it is going to be 100% better than the First. Coming out in August, it is called "Psychoture". Kevin and John from unsteady play on the new album.
Joe)What would you like kids to be saying when they leave a G-spot show?
John) "God damn, what the fuck was that!", would be a good reaction if it was in a good way.
Joe)If every album you have was destroyed except for one, what album would it be?
John)It would have to be The Pixies "Surfer Rosa".
Joe)Do you like Mr. Fibb?
John)Yeah...I like it, itis kind of like carbonated prune juice. I love carbonated prune juice!
Joe)What was the crappiest job you have ever had?
John)I worked as a cashier at Target, during Christmas. I got so used to working so much that one night I tried to bag my blanket, and I figured I should quit my job at Target.
Joe)What is your favorite aspect of playing in the band?
John)It's cool to hang out with weird and interesting people we meet on the road. It's also cool traveling to weird towns.
Joe)Who came up with the band's name, and how?
John)I picked up the name. I don't know why, maybe I was just horny one day, and the name just popped into my head.
Joe)What do you do when you are not playing in the band?
John)I work. I have a job estimating houses for a \construction company.
Joe)What is in the future for G-spot?
John)The new album, were going to tour in August after the cd release party.
Joe)What do you have to say to fans?
John)I think everyone in San Diego should get along at ska shows. The two tones, third wave kids and everyone else who comes to our shows, would just get along.
Joe) Yeah, kids loose the attitude. You should be going to shows to have fun and see the bands, not to try and out trend yourselves, aka Gwenabee's. O.K., here's the next question, anything else to add?
John)Buy the new album, it's good. You will not regret this.
Joe)Thanks to G-spot and check their live shows out, and get the new album.

-Joe Ricavoli

The history-I went to Club Mesa where I was lucky to find the archenemy of Gwar "Techno Destructo." I was allowed to ask a few questions about those hell bound rockers. He was eager to answer questions, which made me suspicious because I've seen the garbage this cyborg leaves in his path and I did not want to be hanged from some meat hook somewhere.

Bruce-First of all I've heard Gwar are sellouts?
Techno-True, they're sellouts and as Techno Destructo arch enemy of Gwar I know they've sold out. They not only sold their music out but they've sold their very souls to Sleazy P. Martini and his crack pipe, but all that plays right into my hands.

Bruce-What's going to take place here tonight?
Techno-Tonight is going to be Gwar's ultimate downfall once and for all. See I have disposed of Sleazy P. Martini and replaced him with a robot. I've used this robot to do two things that you'll see tonight, one is I've sold dumping rights to dump radioactive toxic waste in Antarctica because toxic waste is a great raw material for making mutants and cyborgs and stuff like that. I've used that to make a mutant army of penguins with a huge cyborg penguin that I will ride as I lead the army into battle. At the same time Robot Sleazy has got Gwar addicted to crack, a highly radioactive toxic crack.
Bruce-How mach crack do they consume on tour?
Techno-To totally sedate them you have to hit them over the head with a multi ton rock, plus you have to have acetylene torch to light it. That enables me to have a radioactive toxic crack engagement party, that I'll use to get Slymentha under my control and tonight will be our wedding.

Bruce-You've met the master, what does he look like?
Techno-He can assume different types of forms, but mostly he looks like this big head and scrawny body that sits in his chair. He has wires and tubes coming out of his body going into this huge machine that is his true body, and its as big as a planet.

Bruce-You are the only intergalactic traveler I've met, have you met El Chupacabras?
Techno-Oh yeah, that wacky Chupacabras. He is a gray-alien-gwar hybrid, I don't know how he developed this weird sex thing with goats, but he likes to suck off goats but I think that must have been somewhere in the Oderus gene pool.

Bruce-Have you ever had sex with a grey alien?
Techno-Yeah, it was an unpleasant experience. I personally prefer machines as far as my sexual appetite. When I did they pumped me up with so much of that grey alien joy juice that I didn't know what was going on. You know they're powerful mind controllers, I actually fell in love once in Kansas. She was beautiful, about 8 or 9 feet tall, she had the most beautiful green skin and she had a cute tattoo on her chest, it was a little yellow deer with John Deere under it and the biggest rear wheels you've ever seen in your life. I was in love but I had to leave to fight Gwar, maybe someday I'll hook up with her again. Although I did pick up a road scraper the other night, it was quite satisfying.

Bruce-what's your opinion of O.J. Simpson?
Techno-He did a service, getting rid of those two souls and it's two less bodies that I have to deal with, you know.

Bruce-For the people who want to commit suicide, which method would you recommend?
Tehno-There's a wide variety of methods to choose depending of what kind of mess you want to leave behind. But the most important thing is not the way you do it, but that you just do it, just do it. See every one on earth should simultaneously commit suicide like those guys in....where was it?
Bruce-San Diego
Techno-Yeah, those San Diego guys, they were a bunch of Gwar fans. But the media failed to mention that along with their personal stuff, black Nike's and purple towels, they also had a copy of the new Gwar CD "Carnival of Chaos."
Bruce-They were called "Heavens Gate."
Techno-There is an irresistible message to kill yourself if you play the CD backwards, so rig your CD player. I think they were having a party and they all accidentally listened to it at the same time and poof they went.

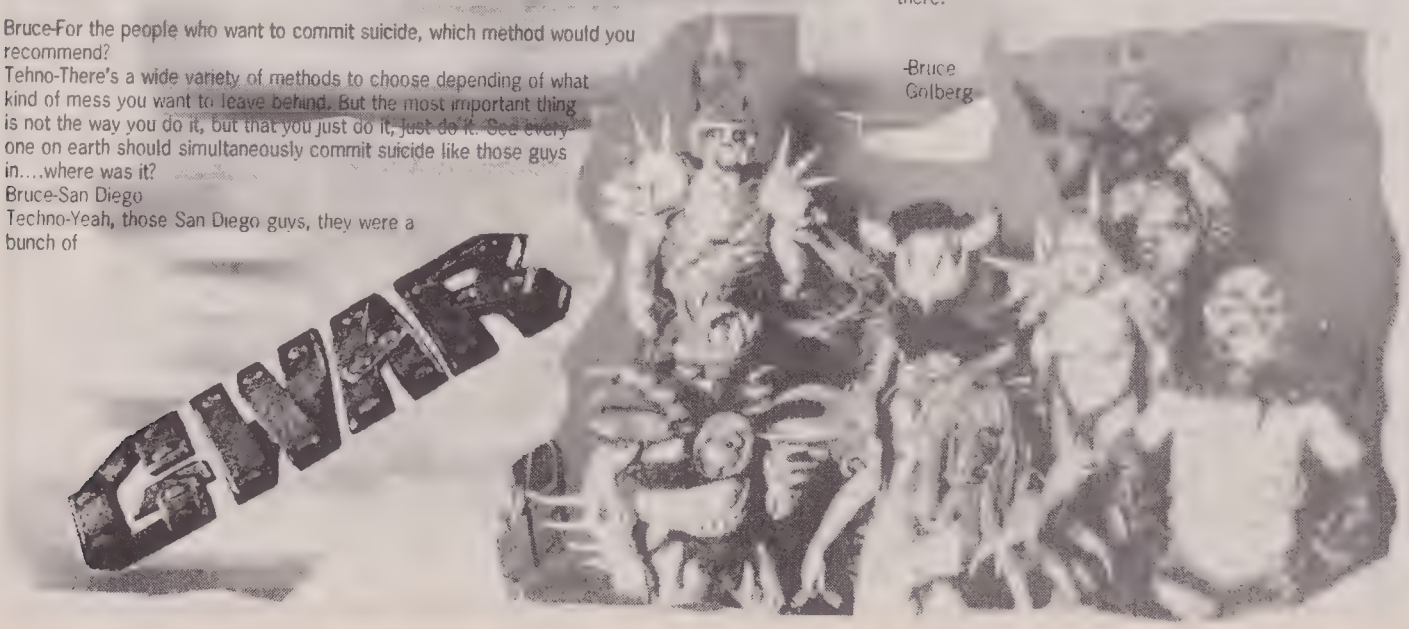
Bruce-How many people do you plan to kill on this tour?
Techno-The numbers are astronomical you need nine super computers just to figure it out. More than a thousand tonight and those are accidental deaths that are caused by them witnessing us doing battle on stage.

Bruce-Is there going to be a human meat grinder?
Techno-There will be a human meat grinder onstage, but it's for virgins. I know it will be hard to find virgins in California, but if we can, we will sacrifice them.

Bruce-I've heard Gwar is part of the Christian Coalition and Ralph Reed (pres. of Christian Coalition) is the CEO of the slave pit.
Techno-Who told you that, that's one of their biggest deepest darkest secrets. Nobody is supposed to know that. Who told you. Who ever told you that will be dealt appropriately.

Bruce-Are you really a bunch of nice guys?
Techno-Fuck no, you asshole! Get the fuck out of my face, now!!!
Bruce-I'm no derelict, I got out of there.

-Bruce Golberg



Sick of It All Interview

BY BRANDON LUCERO

This interview took place backstage at the Whiskey 3/20/97. For all you vinyl enthusiasts , Built to Last should be on vinyl by the end of the summer, so pick it up.

Did you play the New Titans on the Block show:
CRAIG: No, at that point I was in Agnostic Front.

What happened with the break-up - Roger going to jail?
CRAIG: No, Roger going to jail, we just stopped playing for awhile. We came back after that. Vinnie wanted to have a kid, and Roger had a kid. So now Vinnie does have a kid. So, we stopped playing so they could start families. They're back now, and they're playing with Kabula, Jimmy the old drummer, and they're doing well now that Vinnie got himself settled in with his kid. He's going back on the road again, which is good to see. They'll be coming around soon enough.

How about the major label, are you happy with the switch?
Craig: Yeah, it's alright, with all the independents that we were dealing with they were very dishonest and now that we're on a major, things are going pretty well. Sometimes there is a little bit of a communication problem – them not really understanding where we're coming from. But for the most part, it's good. And when that does arise, we try to explain our position a little more cause we're like a specialty item; it's a little difficult for them to deal with us. Maybe sometimes knowing how to market us. It's working out all right.

Did they try to change your sound?
CRAIG: They have nothing to do with us; putting out our record; that's all they do. They press the record, and they put it out. The only time we have a little, I don't want to use the word problem, whenever there's something that comes up like you said, "how is it," once in a while you feel like the advertising is put in the wrong places. But that's because, like I said, we are not a normal band to market. We have a certain type of crowd that's not the norm for most bands. So, we have to go through a lot of fanzines and skate things, and all that sort of stuff. Sometimes it's a little difficult to get all of that arranged. But other than that, as far as them creatively, they have nothing to do with us. We write an album, we record it, and then they just put it out. If they said to us "hey, we don't like your album," we'd say "hey, then don't listen to it."

What were your influences as a band?
CRAIG: Going back a long time ago, it was a lot of old New York stuff. Bands like Negative Approach, Minor Threat. Going in the hardcore scene, stuff like Discharge, GBH. When I first started getting into it, when I was a kid, a lot of European and American hardcore and punk rock. Before that I listened to a lot of heavy metal stuff. I like really aggressive music, and I was always looking to find something that had more to it. At a certain point you want that raw edge, but you also want some quality So you develop your taste over time, I guess.

Anything I hear that I like influences me in one way or another.

Who handles the songwriting?
CRAIG: All four of us; it's a pretty equal deal. We all write songs and we all write lyrics. It's all a joint effort. Every song has a little bit of each of us in it. I might come up with a song and Armand would put a part into my song and we'll write lyrics to it. Or, I will write lyrics to a song that I write music to, and then Pete will put a guitar part into it. It's very random; there's no formula. A lot of times we come in with individual songs, then we'll all just put our input in, and it comes out sounding different than it originally did.

So it's a combined effort?
CRAIG: A combined effort. It takes us awhile to write an album, too. A lot of the songs we write we don't use. We go through a lot of stuff, we only keep certain stuff, so there' not a lot of filler on the albums.

In your credits on Built to Last, you guys thank the Japanese and New Zealand hardcore scenes. How did they differ from our scene here in the U.S.?
CRAIG: In New Zealand, it's very similar in a way. The scene in New Zealand is really strong. A lot of straight edged kids, but not with an attitude, like nice kids that are not into it. A lot of punk rock bands there are very similar to New York or like anywhere in America. In Japan, it's really good, the kids are very enthusiastic. The scene is a little more commercial, and a little bit more mainstream, I'd say in Japan. I don't know; it's the way it comes off to me. The kids are really into it; you have a lot of kids that are diehard hardcore fans, though. But the kids really seem to appreciate it in places like Japan and New Zealand. Because they're starved for it more, they appreciate it more.
They're not snobby about it, they really appreciate what you are trying to do. To them it's fresh. You go there, and you play and you play, you feel it coming back from the crowd, and it inspires you. It puts a little new life in there.

photos by William Meadows

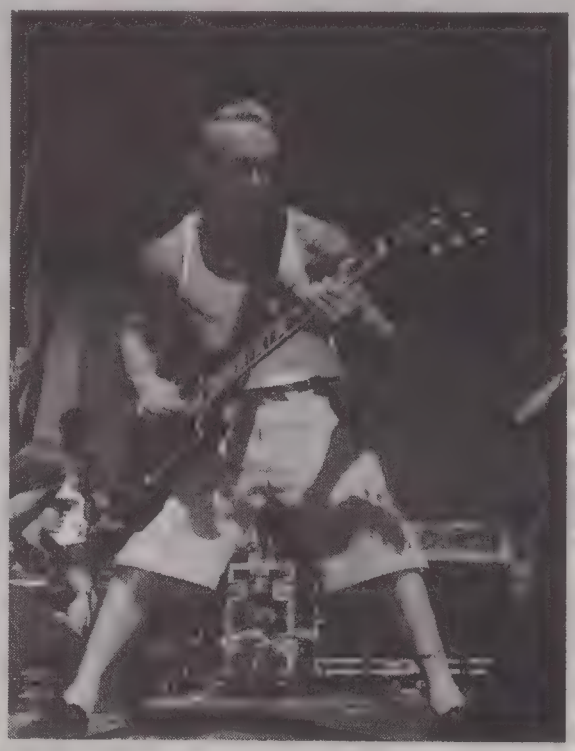
Do you play bigger venues over there?
CRAIG: In Japan yeah, we play pretty good shows. In Japan they are usually pretty big. In New Zealand, we play a lot of small shows like VFW halls, school auditoriums. It was like a throwback to our early days, when I first started. But in Japan, it's really big, the shows are really big, and the turnouts are really big. The people are really nice.

Channel One Skateboards are thanked. Who

skates out of you guys?
CRAIG: When I was little kid in the !70s I used to skate. Lou skates a little bit. Armand doesn't skate. I think Pete used to skate. I don't really skate anymore . . . I don't want to break my hands; it sounds weak, but it's true. I broke my hands a couple of times doing sports. Every time I break my hands, it fucks us up touring wise, but I can skate a little. My friend Jordan has a half pipe in his backyard. I used to go skate there. It's kinda fun, I'm not a great skater or anything.

I never learned myself; I basically just fall off all the time.
CRAIG: I surfed a couple of times with Timmy Chunks, you know Timmy Chunks?

No.
CRAIG: He's a guy that hangs around; he's in the Redemption 87. A famous within the scene. I went surfing with him. He came to my birthday party when I used to live in Rhode Island for a little while. Him and the drummer for the Bouncing Souls taught me how to



surf. It's fun. A New York guy on a surfboard.

Was it weird?
CRAIG: It was hard to stand up. I had rhythm, but I had trouble breaking from a squat to a standing position. Once you stand up, your balance gets a little funny. By the end of the day, I was standing without a problem.

In your hidden track on Built to Last, "I Take Shits," is there any particular memorial shit that inspired you to write that?
CRAIG: There's really a story behind that, but I think I should keep that quiet. I don't know. It has to do with a woman in a motel room. Use your imagination.

That's good enough.
CRAIG: That's a funny song, right?

It's cool; I got a kick out of it.
CRAIG: It's intended as a joke song. But that's me playing drums and Armand playing bass.

No shit?
CRAIG: We switched instruments there.

Yeah, but it's cool; it brings a smile to my face, I'll tell you that.
CRAIG: It brings a smile to my face when I think about the incident. It's a comedy thing amongst the band. It's like an old story, so we wrote a song about it. It makes us laugh.

Better Than A 1000

by Brett Deptula

It started getting a little out of hand when Ray Cappo began spewing his beer all over the entire crowd, defecated on his bass player's foot, then started picking a fight with the sound guy...yea right. Being that the previous statement is obviously bullshit, anyone who was at the Showcase in Corona last Friday night knows it was anything but useless, drunken aggression. Granted it's been a good 5 years since my last straight edge show, but this was more than just a good night for Better Than 1000. It is definitely safe to say that the straight edge scene thrives in the land of sun, smog, and methamphetamine.

Grahm Land-guitar, Ken Olden-drums, and bass player Jeff Neumann opened the show with somewhat of a prolonged intro enhancing the energy level of an already anxious crowd. When Ray Cappo hit the first note to "Live Today" the room displayed an eruption of energy that would fail to dwindle throughout the entire show. Being that the record had only been released 3 days prior, and this was only the bands fourth show ever, it was amazing to see how many people had already knew every lyric and sang each one as if it were an anthem. However, the highlight of the evening came when about 1/4 of the crowd rushed the stage and joined the band for their final song, "Take A Stand."

I had the opportunity to speak with Ray the previous day. Here is what he had to say:

SKRATCH: How old were you when you started getting into Hardcore?

RAY CAPPO: 16

S: Youth of Today was you first band?

RC: Yea. I started that band in May of '85. Our first record came out February of '86.

S: Were you into the whole Krishna thing back then too?

RC: Interesting man. We just did a remix of "Break Down The Walls," and ya know how different everything sounds when you pull old stuff back up. Well, at the very end of one of the songs I can hear myself sigh and very faintly say "Hare Krishna." That was a pretty long time ago. I don't think I was really taking it to seriously then though. But I've always considered myself a spiritual person.

S: You obviously have certain strict values you live by which are conveyed in your music, but it doesn't seem that your someone who would be fanatical about it.

RC: When you hear about something that's fanatical it usually means people are very sentimental and they don't really have any substance. I try not to push it down people's throats. I definitely feel there is more to a persons substance value as compared to the deep spiritual conversation you may have with someone that's filled with clichés that don't actually mean anything.

S: Being that a lot of people often throw hardcore and punk into the same salad, do you think the recent exploitation of punk in the recent years has in any way effected the HC scene?

RC: Hmm..Well as the years go mainstream ears get more ragged. I mean, I don't thing Green Day necessarily started playing pop music, I think pop culture came to Green Day. It's sort of how I see it. I don't think they bend their music at all, they're just doing what they do and the pop market says: "hey that sounds cool," even though a lot of mainstream masses don't truly appreciate it. A lot of these bands have been doing what they do for a long time and again, their just doing what they do. I started doing music when I was 16. Now it's like all these people I sort of grew up with that used to listen to Shelter and YOT are now lawyers and business men. They grew up. So that has something to do with it too. Things change, people grow up so to speak.

S: Shelter is your primary commitment right?

RC: Yea. Pretty much.

S: Better Than A 1000 has been playing a lot of shows on the east coast?

RC: We've played like 3 actually and they've all been really cool.

S: So you've only played 3 shows with this band? That's pretty funny.

RC: Yea. This will be our fourth.

S: Is Better Than A 1000 a project you'll make it a point to continue down the road?

RC: Yea, I think so. I don't see why not. It's a time in my life when I just want to do music.

S: How old are you?

RC: 31

S: Your a vegetarian right?

RC: Yea.

S: What's you favorite vege dish?

RC: Truthfully, I love Mexican food, bean burritos. Healthfully, whole grain tortilla, brown rice, slovaki, avocado.

S: Have you been to that Krishna restaurant in Laguna Beach?

RC: Yea. I used to always go there. That was actually the first temple I stayed at. I remember this guy Zach brought me there, now he's in Rage Against The Machine. All those guys brought me there, we stayed overnight. Nobody used to really like to stay there so I used to go there by myself. Wake up go swimming, jam on the beach.

Better Than A 1000

go there by myself. Wake up go swimming, jam on the beach.

S: It's pretty nice down there.

RC: Yea it is.

S: Hmm...

RC: What else is on your mind?

S: I don't know I had a question, but I lost it somewhere by the burritos.

S: Oh yea. There's a spiritual meaning behind the name Better Than A 1000 right?

RC: It's a Buddhist term. Actually, he did this one chapter called "Better Than A 1000:" "Better than a 1000 trees is one tree that gives fruit. Basically pointing out that it's not the quantity, but the substance that counts. That's what that song "Just One" is about: "I know it the good, not just the plenty and with all our abundance we end up empty." Someone asked me in the previous interview if I thought Krishna and Buddha beliefs are in contradiction. They don't understand, there's no contradiction, they both actually work together. God is God no matter what religion you are. Just like the sun is the sun. Spiritual people in different cultures have different prophets. It's according to the people, the time, and the circumstance. Suppose you're a teacher and you have to teach math to a five year old. You have to teach the child one type of truth. If you have to teach a calculus student you have to teach them a little more than just math. It's still math just at a different level. Well, at the same time spirituality is like that. It's a different message, at a different level, given to people at a different time. So it's actually the same thing. It's hard to lose focus of your spirituality.

S: Especially in Southern California.

RC: Yea, especially. Your spirituality should not be neglected, but balanced. That's what I teach. To have a healthy spiritual and physical well being you can't be spiritual and mistreat your physical, as well as visa versa. You definitely need a healthy balance.

S: I think the record is really good, Honestly, I think I even like it better than Shelter.

RC: That's OK. Are you going to the show tomorrow?

S: Yea I'll be there.

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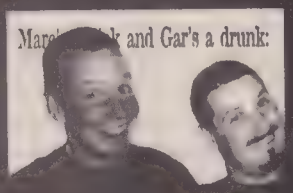

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ADJUS TMEN TS

Interview with the Adjustments

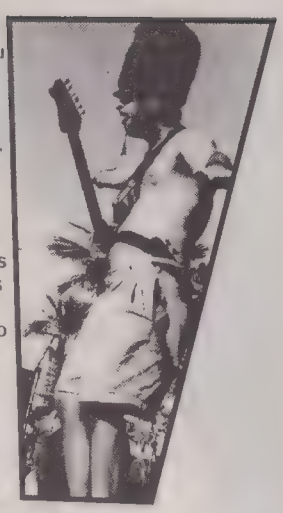
The Adjustments are a five piece band that you really can't put a label on. They were formerly known as a Janitors Against Apartheid, a label that seems to follow them everywhere. Their music is aggressive and in your face but still is good. The boys in the Adjustments and I sat down after the show at the BACK ALLEY on July 25th to have an intellectual discussion about their music, lawsuits with Willy Wonka, and the handicapped. And it went a little something like this:

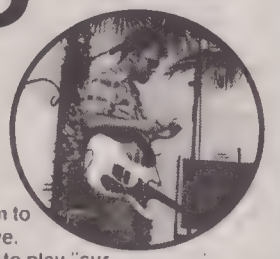
Andrew: Who am I interviewing right now?
Lodge: I'm Lodge. I sing and play sax.
Clay: I'm Clay and I play bass.
Blin: I'm Blin and I am in charge of guitar, vocals, and birds of chorus.
A: Who are the people who collectively make up the Adjustments?
L: Us. Eric Clifford who plays drums, Paul Bungpumper P on trumpet.
A: Where do you consider yourselves to be based out of?
L: Chicago, Miami, Phoenix, Los Angeles
C: Eagle Rock
B: And Compton
L: Cause his dad may have been black or Jewish so he might be from Compton (talking about Blin)
A: When did you guys start the Adjustments?
L: April?
B: It was April fools day when we conceived of the band.
A: How did you guys form?
L: Janitors Against Apartheid broke up and I wanted to keep going. I found the drummer first. And then it all came together.
A: Who in the Adjustments were in Janitors?
L: Me and Bungpumper P
A: What happened to Janitors?
L: A couple people quit, we tried to replace them. People quit because they weren't into doing it as a more full time kind of thing. They were kind of lazy, well, we all are.
A: So you guys would like to do as a full time kind of thing?
L: Sure, why not. The difference between Janitors and the Adjustments is we all really enjoy playing a lot.
A: What kind of music do you consider yourself?
L: Well, we've thinking about. I know we're not ska and I know we're not ska-punk. The Orange County kids don't like us so we must not be ska- punk. We're just going more harder stuff and more slower stuff. It's kind of punk too.
B: More complex song writing.
L: We have a better bass player
A: What would you consider you influences to be?
C: Collectively, we all have different influences. I was heavily into bluegrass.
L: He's a hippie. look at him.
A: I'm not wearing any socks does that count?
A: How about individually?
B: I'm interested in everything.
L: I like music. There's music I don't listen to but I think that all music has value. Even if it is Hanson.
B: You can catch something cool out of every form of music.
L: This guy was into Slayer (pointing to Eric the drummer)
A: How long have the Adjustments been playing out in clubs?
L: We started playing out after a day. It wasn't a good idea.
C: We played a couple shows with a different guitar player and then he quit the band.
L: Our first show was here (At the BACK ALLEY) and I played guitar. It was pretty pathetic.
B: There was about the same size crowd as tonight.
L: But they didn't think to break out the chairs. (referring to the crowd during Grover's Headache) That was fucking lame.
B: It was a fireside chat. I thought we were going to bust out 'Kum Baya'.
A: How has your response been?
L: Live, not so great. But our CD came out two weeks ago and we've already moved a thousand of them.
A: DO you think that is attributed to being formerly known as Janitors Against Apartheid?
L: Partially, well, mostly since nobody knows who we are. And we're on Stiff Dog Records. Darrell is fucking awesome. As far as response live, I don't think we appeal to the ska crowd as much as Janitors did. I want to play more non-ska shows. I don't think we're ska and I don't want the kids coming thinking we're a ska band and being disappointed.
B: I think we're a young band and now that we're all together and inputting we're going to fuckin' rock in every type of style. If every music has it's place then what better way to rock a crowd than to go over that. We want to play any kind of show and have a set for every kind of show. Funk, fuckin' techno, country. We want to play bar mitzvahs. Anyone who wants us to play bar mitzvahs call us at (888) 347 - 5829.
A: How did you guys hook up with Stiff Dog?
L: He liked Janitors a lot. We had a lot of contact with him and when I started the band he 'Yeah. I'll put something out'.
A: Do you guys have an address where people can write you?
C: P.O. Box 41056, Los Angeles 90041
A: Any last comments?
L: Buy our CD cause we need to pay rent. Oh and one other thing FUCK TOM ZARR!!
A: Who?
L: Our old guitar player. I got my keyboard stolen and I don't care what he say it's his fuckin' fault. I'm taking him to small claims court. I know the legal system cause I got sued by Willy Wonka!!!
A: You guys got sued by Willy Wonka?
L: Janitors and Dill Records did. We had a CD off of Dill called 'Nerds' and it looked like a box of Nerd candy. There was another band on it called One Eye Open but they didn't go after them at all which is fine. I wouldn't them involved in this shit any way. It was a big legal matter. We had to go up to San Francisco. At the end of a thing there was a settlement. It wasn't much. We had to give back all our shirts and they airbrushed over them and gave them to homeless people.
B: GO to the Willy Wonka rave. They hire midgets to dress up as Oompa Loompa. I just want to see Mega-Midget. I just figure that's where seven or eight midgets get together and form Mega-Midget. I would like to add I like the handicapped and one day I hope to be with you. It's true.
L: He wants to be a porn star and if not he wants to be a retard.
B: I like to pretend I have Terret Syndrome. I go into Denny's and I'm chillin and then randomly yell Whoop!! WHOOP!!! MUTHA FUCKA!!!
A: What about the penis game?
(Blin in the background yelling penis)
L: We used to do that in French class cause we learned how to say it in French.
A: Well anyway thanks guys.
The Adjustments (except for Blin who is still yelling penis): Thank you.

And so ended the stimulating conversation with the Adjustments. The Adjustments have just released a four song CD off of Stiff Dog Records, which is available everywhere. So, go and buy so you can help them pay rent.

ADJUS TMEN

ZIGGENS





The Ziggen's have an April Fool's Day kinda style. Very convincing, serious, with the right riff, you'll believe that the sky is falling. Their bouncing bops and streaming songs are embedded in your musical mind library, and the talent they exhibit will have you forgetting their jest-filled lyrics. A live show is a carnival funhouse romp, with Lead Ziggen Bert Sousanka appearing in full Technicolor housedresses one night to Buckingham Palace highhats the next. The remaining three run the fashion gamut of a 50's Elvis Daddy-O! to middle-class good boys. The band has been recorded here in the Skunk studio by Mike Happoldt, producer of such jambalaya styles as Sublime & Slightly Stoopid. The Ziggen's echo an originality, you could call it surfabilly.

One tune will have you clumsily skipping the white man's overbite, while the next will start a pit to wreck the joint. I have seen about 10 Ziggen's shows in the last 6 months, with not much variation in set order or crowd control. But the one difference is the frenzy they create, the energy and approval levels rising over the last performance.

Just off a mini tour of the Western states, I ask Dickie how it feels to be a Rock Star. "We aren't touring stars, we just like to drive around for 3 days at a time!"

Their current release on Skunk Records "Ignore Amos" is a high quality 60+ minutes of commercially professional recordings for a California Summer Barbeque. Surf tunes, punk riffs, dreamy makeout ballads, an all around family pleaser. Miguel has a range of styles he incorporates that reflect every musical taste from Dick Dale to Weird Al Yankovic. Bert's vocals run from a lilting balladeer to a smarmy Vegas lounger, with a fist-clenching snarl tossed in to keep you on your toes. If you get to a show, you'll see familiar L.B.C. faces that frequent the Skunk family. Don't be alarmed, as everyone takes their happy pills at a Ziggen's gig, partly out of respect for these fathers & husbands. But also due to the fact that, of the Skunk bands & circle of friends, The Ziggen's are the daddy that will ground you, the rebel uncle just out of the pokey, and the older bro you want to have take you in the garage to teach you how to strum a six string. While their catchy favorites seem to evade being performed live, despite shouts from fans to play "surfungus" or "channel surfing", an occasional rendition of "badfish" slips out, bringing the raucous club to a few moments of mandatory silence, which gives you a chance to hear how well this band performs. They flat out RULE, can kill guitarist anywhere, with their technical arranging unbeatable. The rythym section never misses a beat, and Bert can sing the hell out of song, be it a snide salute to Orange County or a fond remembrance to a lost friend. Get to a show, so you can have a beer with John or Brad, who always have time to chill with everyone before the show. Bert may tend to busy up with the specs to set up, but Dickie never has been too swamped, and he's got a center stage smile & charisma, not to mention a few words ofwisdom to keep you stoked & in a great mood. When asked John for a few minutes to formally interview, he replied with, "just tell people to go to a few shows to get to know us." Not very high browed rock stars, after all!

-Brandi Bennington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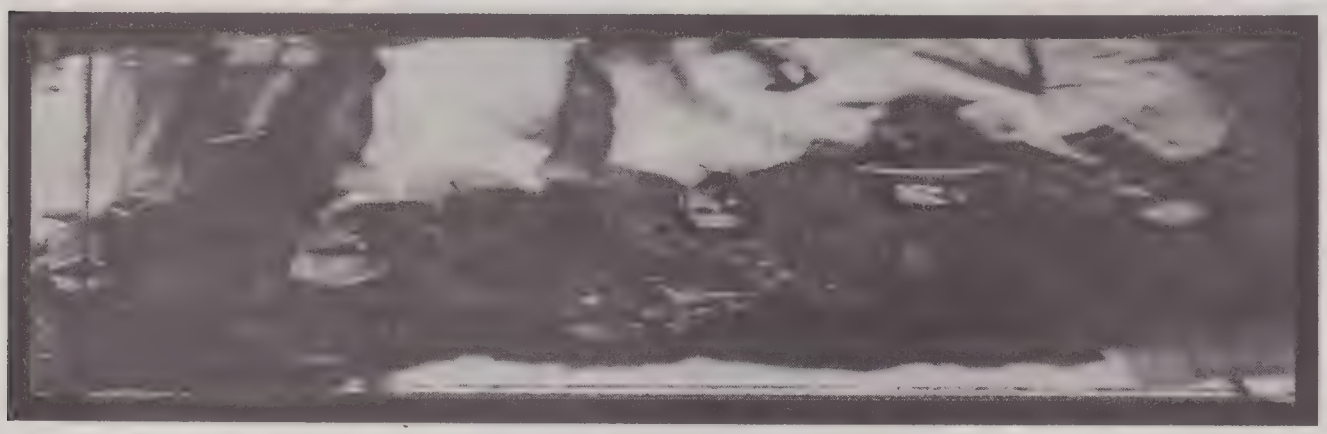

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Pinhead Circus

BY BILL MEADOWS

Denver's Pinhead Circus are primed to be BYO records' next cavalcade of punk rock for your listening pleasure. I had the opportunity to talk with the Pinheads when they played Corona's Showcase Theater with label founders Youth Brigade, as well as label mates Brand New Unit from Canada. The guys were kind enough to tell me some stories as they sipped adult beverages from 32 ounce Del Taco cups .

So let's get started . . . names, ages and instruments played.
SCOOTER: I'm Scooter, I'm 24, and I play guitar and sing.
TREVOR: I'm Trevor, I play bass, and sing back-up. I'm 352 - I mean 22.
OTIS: I'm Otis, I'm 16, and I'm just the drummer.

Sixteen?!?
OTIS: That's a lie, but I don't wanna tell my real age.

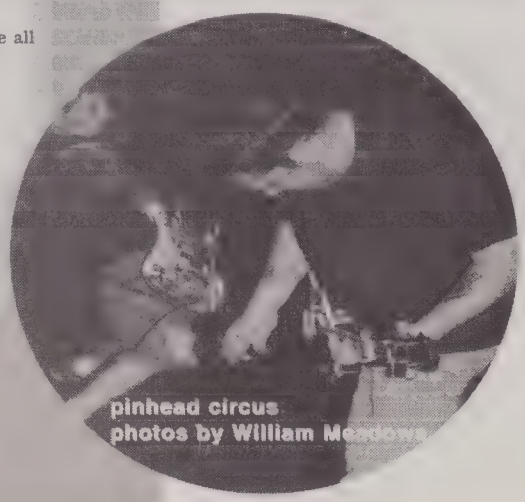
Sixteen is good enough.
TREVOR: He's not the youngest, but he is the hairiest.

So how many times have you guys been here now?
SCOOTER: This is the fourth time we've been here, but it's only the second time we've gotten to hang out. We were just here for three weeks recording our album for BYO. That time we got to hang out in the city for awhile. That was great!

Where did you record at?
SCOOTER: We recorded at Westbeach in LA.

Really! How was that?
TREVOR: It was great! Jimi Hendrix used to record there.
SCOOTER: Yeah, Steve Kravac and Mike Stern (from Youth Brigade) produced it.

Yeah, I got the tape and it sounded great. Sort of a rocked out NOFX. I hope I don't offend you with that.
SCOOTER: Now, we're all about rock. Otis here doesn't even listen to punk.
OTIS: Yeah, I'm an old metal and rock guy, I hate punk.
TREVOR: You can't really say that, you like the Ramones.



pinhead circus
photos by William Meadows

OTIS: Yeah, I guess. But I listen to Black Sabbath and AC/DC. I'm just not really into the newer punk stuff.

How long have you guys been together?
SCOOTER: A long time.
TREVOR: Like nine years now. But we just got Otis recently. We've known him since high school, though.
OTIS: I knew their old drummer, so when he left, I just kind of came aboard.
TREVOR: But yeah, Scooter actually started the band in '87 or '88.

How's the scene out there in Denver?
TREVOR: It used to be really shitty, back in like '90. But now it's getting better. There's a warehouse by Coors Field that does all-ages shows.
SCOOTER: Yeah, it's cool. They get a couple of kegs, two or three bands, and charge like two buck to get in.
TREVOR: The other place was the Golden Bowl. It was this bowling alley that did all ages shows. The cool thing was that parents would let their kids go to a bowling alley in the suburbs before they let them go to a warehouse downtown.
SCOOTER: But the last show that ever happened there, the cops set up this big sting for some reason. The catch was that it was the first day of school, so like 20 kids showed up, nobody was there. Needless to say, nothing really happened, and the owners of the alley got so pissed they just backed out. Here they had put all this work into the community, and this was the thanks they got. So they bailed.
TREVOR: He's a long-winded guy, Scooter is.

No problem. He's helping me out. So how do you guys do in Denver?
SCOOTER: It gets better all the time. The last show we did was with the Nobodies and Funeral Oration. The club was sectioned off in all ages and over 21 sections. The cool thing was that so many kids showed up that they had to expand the all ages side. We were the only ones on the 21 side!

Where else do you play? Denver's kind of in the middle of nothing.
TREVOR: We play in Cheyenne, Wyoming a lot; they have a cool little scene. Yeah, there and in Casper.

Ever go east to play?
SCOOTER: We played some shows in Illinois. That's as far east as we've gotten so far. The thing is that we really weren't even supposed to play those shows. We were on tour with Welt and Recoil from Sacramento, and Recoil was having no luck. Their bass player got third degree burns on his leg from the heater in the van they were driving and had to go to the hospital, thus ending their tour. So Welt asked us to do three more weeks on the east coast. We could have done if it Trevor here hadn't had to get back to school.

What's the strangest show you guys ever played?
TREVOR: I don't know. There have been some really strange ones. The one that sort of sticks out in my mind was when we played with the Queers and the Nobodies at this transvestite bar in Colorado Springs. It was too weird walking in and seeing these big linebacker guys all dressed up in drag! Oh, by the way, what do you thing of our Italian? [gesturing towards Otis]]
EVERYONE IN EARSHOT: Shhhiiittt!
TREVOR: Yeah, that's everyone's reaction to that one. That's the Pinhead Circus ice breaker question, or ice creator, depends on the crowd.

So how is the BYO thing going so far?
SCOOTER: It's going great! The Stern brothers are great. The record sounds great and is coming out on July 22. Everything is great actually, it's kind of strange as well because BYO didn't even like our early stuff!
TREVOR: We didn't even think to send them anything in the beginning. I always looked at them as being on a different level. I remember being 13 and watching Another State of Mind and thinking "wow, these guys are great." Now I'm playing with them as well as working with them!

So there you have it, Pinhead Circus. A great band and an even nicer bunch of guys! If you want to contact them, you can do so through BYO Records, P.O. Box 67A64, Los Angeles, CA, 90067, or online at www.byorecords.com. And don't forget to check out the new record, Detailed Instructions for the Self Involved, in stores July 22. And in the oh so sublime words of a guy named Chris, "you can't stop the punk rock!" Think about it, will you?

Knapsack Interview with
Blair: vocals
Colby: Drums

As sweat droplets race down my pinky fleshed face like a 4k marathon at the Warped tour I search for one of the indie worlds' most emotion-driven forces: Knapsack. Where'd those three kids go? Behind the second/third stage they hide and meet me at the hefty two and a half foot barricade. The three piece and I sneak in between booths and huddle for a few words...
What would you be doing if you weren't in this band?
Colby :I would just get a real full-time job. I want to college and stuff. I think it would be fun to have a job you wanted to excel in.

What's your definition of music?
Colby :I'm a big song guy but I also like a lot of stuff that just creates a mood. I prefer a real loose definition of music, if one at all.

What keeps you motivated in playing shows?
Colby :It is fun. We, or at least I don't have a message to send. We play places and if we have a good time, we come back and do it again. But we actually don't play that often these days. I mean, except for a quick stint with Jimmy Eat World and Sensefield in the mid-west we haven't played outside the west coast for this album. It just didn't sound fun to any of us.

What would be the ultimate thing you want from Knapsack?
Colby :I've been more than satisfied for awhile now. You always want more, but I never expected any of this so it is all just a pleasant surprise now. It is nice to hear that you've affected someone's life in a positive way. That is my favorite thing.

What would be the number one band you wouldn't want to play with or tour with?
Colby :Well, the one playing now (tolerating side stage band with metal sound) and any other band that is like metal. Yeah, I think my answer is the band playing right now.
Blair :Maybe Collective Soul. It would be a really bad band that takes themselves really seriously and tries to be earnest about what they're doing- but somehow it's so ridiculous. Anyone that posturs drives me nuts.

KNAPSACK

Any punk bands you're into?
Blair :I grew up on punk and I'll break out the records now and again but, most of them sound really bad. Most of them can't stand the test of time. Some do, but very few.

What would you consider your style? To me it has a little punk, a little emo, umm...kind of indie side.
Blair :We just write songs. It just comes out. I'm glad to have a song, you know I like this song- I wrote this song. But, you don't consciously go for sound usually.

If you had to throw out one instrument in your band what would it be?
(the band is stumped for five to ten seconds)
Colby :Uhhh...Maybe one of the guitars.
Blair :Yeah, that would be the easiest- we could still be a normal band with one guitar.

Who is the most talented musician in the band?
Everybody :ME!!!

If you could get one message across to your fans, what would it be?
Colby :I don't have a message. We play rock and roll. Hopefully you get rocked and go home happy.

Well, it works for me...

(he

(hed-pe)
by GARY TUCKER

(hed-pe) is:

Wesstyle - G-leads of speed (guitar)
M.C.U.D. - Thunder throat of flow and info (vocals)
Chizad - Electric rhythm corruptions & vocal reinforcement (guitar/vocals)
Mawk - The earthquake (bass)
B.C. - Thee 808 & beat of pace (percussion)
D.J. Product - The turntable arsonist (dj)

With all of the (what seems like) millions of bands now in O.C., they are now at the forefront of the scene. With the huge outbreak of their first CD, Church of Realities, they dropped an enormous amount of, as I call it, "reality check" on the ears of O.C. that have been strong enough to take a listen. They are definitely not the regular kind of band that you would see at a show. They've brought back the basics of hip-hop with a little bit of trip to then overlay it all with a tight groove and hardness that leaves you hard for more. On Friday, the 13th of June (how appropriate) I got to talk with the HB-LB, G-Punk band, (hed-pe).

Where are you guys from?
WESSTYLE: We came straight out of HB, and Product and Jared are out of LB. But props goes out to HB cause they were the kids who were there checking us out from day one.

Yeah, it's cool how you guys have brought the two cities style together to make the sounds you've got going on now. It's like a unity thing going on here.
WESSTYLE: Yeah, Jared and Product are the hip-hop kats from LB. Yeah, at first I was calling our shit G-Punk from like gangsta rap style music, and then some punk, but we don't have the gangsta style lyrics and shit. And then throwing DJ spins in there. Product was difficult at first.
DJ PRODUCT: Yeah at first I didn't know how to plan them together (the two styles), but once we developed, we knew how to use the hip-hop foundation with the punk over layer, and blended it to be (hed-pe) style.
WESSTYLE: Everybody at first, like the record people, like Howard, were saying, "oh, I don't know about that DJ stuff," and this and that, and we knew we were working out. But you know, it just doesn't happen over night. We had to work it out live, and now we know how it works and how it doesn't work.

Yeah, well obviously you guys have worked hard on getting your sound to where it's at now.
DJ PRODUCT: Yeah, you know it took three years to develop the sound to get it to where we wanted it to be. You know, it wasn't an overnight development. I think the time was good for it, too, you know, to strengthen the sound, to strengthen the hip-hop foundation, you know.
WESSTYLE: It would be cool to think if you could just fuse the gap and get rid of the sections of radio and all that shit, you know, musically.

Yeah, that says a lot - where you want things to flow. So how long have you guys been together playing shows and getting out on the whole scene?
WESSTYLE: I think about three years, since we started getting heard and all.

The first I ever heard of you guys was on the Independence Day '95 compilation.
WESSTYLE: Yeah, that was about our fourth show at that time (the Independence Day '95 show). Then the comp came out with our first track on there, "Spam."
DJ PRODUCT: Yeah, that was our first true demo release with "Spam" on there.
WESSTYLE: That was eight-track status.

That was only eight tracks?
WESSTYLE: Yeah, those tracks are the same ones off of Church of Realities.

I recently just got hold of a promotion tape with three new songs on it that are going to be on your new CD coming out , and while listening to it, I noticed that you guys redid the song "Ground" that's on your first CD, Church of Realities. Why did you guys choose to do that?
CHIZAD: Yeah, that's cool cause on Church, that has "P.O.S." by ourselves, and on the new one coming out, that has the new "P.O.S."
DJ PRODUCT: Yeah, actually for the new CD coming out, we redid, I think like eight songs.
WESSTYLE: Yeah, Church we wanted to release as more to the raw state and more underground and put the crazy samples on it that we couldn't put out otherwise on other shit and have a lot of freedom. And at the same time, only a few people got to hear those songs, so we wanted to have the new versions on a national release again, and now we also changed them a little bit, so I think it's a little stronger format that what it was. So now the songs are in two different versions.

So when does the new CD come out?
WESSTYLE: In August, August 24th. Yeah, we just got done mastering and recorded with T-Ray, who did some Cypress Hill and Helmet. And then we got Harvey Weinberger for the mastering, who did Nirvana's Nevermind and Ben Gross who mixed it, which sounded really good. So we put props out to Jive for hooking us with those guys.

What's the new album called?
WESSTYLE: (hed-pe) and that's enough to swallow right there. It's self titled. (pe) - planetary evolution, penis envy (laughs). Yeah, whatever, you decide.

How does it feel to be signed to Jive Records?
WESSTYLE: It's been killer so far!

What other bands or artists are on Jive Records?
WESSTYLE: There are mostly hip-hop artists on there from the old school, like Tribe Called Quest, KRS-1, R-Kelly, Spice-1, Celly-Cell and Too-Short.
CHIZAD: We're kinda like the first on there of our kind and our style.
DJ PRODUCT: We're the only white boys on their label, put it that way! I know I'm the first white DJ.

So did you guys shop for Jive Records specifically, or did they all of the sudden notice you guys and start checking you out, or how did all of this come about?
WESSTYLE: Well, when we put out Church independently, a couple of labels got ahold of it. We got some response off of that, and actually Jive was one of the first that we talked to. But going back even further, we met up with a kat named Howard Benson who was down checking out Marmoset at Club 168. We hooked up with him and talked with him; of course, things ended up not working out there, and we were kinda too young for where we were at anyways. And we knew we weren't really ready yet. So he gave the tape to Jeff Fenster at Jive, and he came down, checked us out, and here we are. We had also met with Geffen Records at the time, but that just didn't seem for real, we just felt like another number talking to fat people.

As far as promotions go where do you see Jive taking your music?
WESSTYLE: A lot is based upon the way we mark ourselves, sticking with what we've always done, and writing within the skate community with focuses on the beginning and shit like that. That's where the kids are that like this kind of music, and that's where we're gonna keep working it. But just on a bigger level, you know, saying shit, and putting out 12 inches to DJs and all that, going real underground. We're mainly gonna try to keep it real; that's the main thing.

Any plans to tour? Or do you want to keep all of this real local?
WESSTYLE: Yeah, for sure we have plans to tour.
CHIZAD: Yeah, like right now we're doing a bunch of shows, warming up for touring when the album comes out, and we still have a few of the big booking agencies seeing us. So we want to make sure they all see us before we even get into a big signed agreement.
WESSTYLE: Plus we want to wait for the album to get out there. You can't tour without the album out there.

Where did you guys record this new album?

WESSTYLE: We spent two months in Massachusetts on a farm with farting horses!
CHIZAD: Yeah, it was a real farm out in the middle of nowhere, a farm house, with a rad studio.
B.C.: Yeah, we're talking the milk came from the milk man!
CHIZAD: No, seriously, we were like away from real civilization that we were used to.

Were you guys still able to flow, sound wise, when you were out there in Massachusetts, and were you able to keep that same vibe that you've got going here in O.C.?
WESSTYLE: It was good man! It was perfect for the whole band at the time, cause we had to get all together and concentrate. There was too much shit going on back here. We couldn't get rides anywhere to pull it off, and there was just too much chaos. And at the same time we were getting signed, I was living in my car, and we got evicted from our house. So it was kind of like freeloading on a house in Mass. for awhile.
CHIZAD: It was like a lessening of pressure just to go away and we didn't have to worry about anything but to record.

I heard that you guys were getting Snuggles fabric softener sent to you from back home when you were out there.
WESSTYLE: Oh yeah, that's a start! We were getting buds shipped to us all the time. Here we are on a farm, that's a big fucking deal. We're doing music 15 hours a day, we do it on weed, you know. We get high, or else the same shit just keeps bugging you over and over again. And so we were desperate for a shipment, so somebody wrapped it in Snuggles, which I guess will permeate anything, I guess, so there it was!

CHIZAD: Yeah, it was insane. You could taste it. It like burned our throats!
WESSTYLE: Yeah, we couldn't even smoke a whole ounce cause it tasted like Snuggles!

I read an interview on you guys in '95, and you talked about the writing of your music and your focus on getting into peoples' heads. What are some topics or feelings you like to get out there for everyone to take in?
WESSTYLE: Well it starts with like, if you don't have anything to say, then who wants to hear you sing about it? So we just have to dig deep and bring up real issues, and key in on those feelings around us, and we frame the songs around that.

d)-pe

Do you guys write the lyrics together, or is that pretty much Jared's ground?
WESSTYLE: No, he's the MC. I mean we all have common topics and beliefs within the band that we discuss, which comes out in our music, but no, he's the lyricist.
CHIZAD: Some people like to hear music that doesn't really even have anything more than entertainment to them, but we all personally don't really. We're more into like, it would feel better knowing that our stuff means something important to us, too. And that we all get to share it, put it down, get into it, and feel good about it. And if people understand it and get into it, then it's even more of a payoff for us.
WESSTYLE: You can't just beat people over the head with the same fucking thing all the time, you know. Even if it's a good point, if somebody hears it again and again, then they're gonna refuse it. And, life is bigger than any one issue, so it's this broad thing. I don't think it's anything like a lot of other people these days will say, I think it's like a common mindset of the planet. That's what we believe -- that we are all evolving to a certain place right now.

You guys are headlining shows a lot lately. Do you feel this to be rewarding, or do you see it as just another show?
WESSTYLE: Oh, it's cool, it makes it feel like you have a better platform in which you are playing for people. Cause when you're opening up, you don't always have as good a sound or are exposed to as many people.
CHIZAD: It's cool, it feels good, but it feels like there's a little more responsibility. Cause if you're opening up, then you feel like you're proving yourself, and whatever happens, happens, doesn't matter cause it's not your show. But if we're the top billing of a show, or if we're at home, then people start to take it personally, like "uh, you better do good," you know. It's lots of responsibility.

When you guys are playing a show, what do you feed off of, or what drives you to put on such a powerful set every time?
DJ PRODUCT: Well, a lot of the bullshit we deal with every day just feels of anger, man.
CHIZAD: For us, the only time we're getting really hyped up is for when we're playing. That's our love!
WESSTYLE: Yeah, we don't get up off the couch until it's time to play, no!
CHIZAD: So if we're gonna represent our band then we're gonna fucking do it like it's our last time ever, cause you never know, you can't take it for granted.

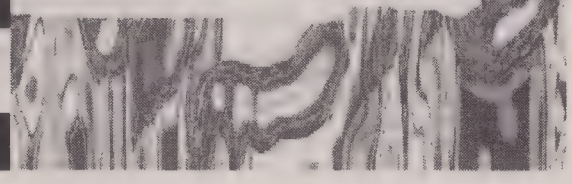
Something else that caught my attention was the live pyrotechnics going on-with you guys throwing sparks everywhere, when you play.
DJ PRODUCT: Oh yeah. See, I drink a big 40 oz. of King Cobra every night, and like when I have to take a piss real bad, I'll just go and light it on fire. I'm telling you man, it never fails. It's like drinking gasoline. So that can explain the sparks.
WESSTYLE: Yeah, the first time Product came down, we were just stoked to have a DJ and all, but like, when he started doing that shit, we knew it was on!
CHIZAD: I thought something was on fire at first, so I'm like "oh, shit," so I ran and turned off my amp and then I looked, and I'm like "oh, OK."
WESSTYLE: Yeah, we weren't sure if it was BC's ass, or what.
BC: No. Was is just upset because he can't make a sound with his ass!
WESSTYLE: No, I'm just kidding. It's all a joke.
BC: Yeah, he tries voluntarily, but his ass is all played out, so it doesn't make a sound.
WESSTYLE: What, wait a minute, we're not talking about asses here.

Do you guys have a favorite place that you've played in O.C.?
BC: Club 369 and the #%'&@*(%@# theater.
WESSTYLE: Yeah, good sound and crowd.

Are there any bands you prefer to play with?
WESSTYLE: Yeah, there's Suction, they're bros, and I think they're tight, and Vitamin L, they're bros. Deftones. I don't know, there's lots of good bands out there.

I know you have been helped out by a lot of your sponsors. Who are some of those companies that have supported you?
EVERYONE: Black Flys, Vans, G-1, Split, 23 Skateboards, Airwalk, etc.

Do you want to put out any individual props to anyone in particular who has helped you out with exposure to get where you are now?
JARED: Big Ray.
WESSTYLE: The world.
JARED: Big Ray!
BC: G-1 has helped us out a lot.
JARED: Big Ray!
WESSTYLE: Big Ray!
JARED: Well for us, it's hard to thank one person individually, whether it be me, or one person in the band. Who knows, it just so happens that we're into a style of music that certain people also get into. I don't know if you call it luck or whatever. People are just getting into the same vibe at the same time, and we just happen to be doing something that vibe wise is real. Cause you know we've got a manager and a huge label out of New York and you know, who you gonna attribute it to? You know, we thank everyone!
WESSTYLE: Yeah, props to all you people coming to shows and all supporting us.



Alphabet Records

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WARPED TOUR 1997—
6 DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES... WELL SORTA

WARPED TOUR 3rd STAGE by David Turbow

The second stop of the Warped Tour happened to fall on July 3rd this year, which is the day after my birthday. Here is what I remember, considering that I was functioning on about 75% physiological capacity from the previous evening's festivities. I rolled out of bed at 10:45 a.m. in a panic trying to make it there for the first band at 12 noon. The weather was extremely hot in Dominguez Hills, the air was dusty, the cops were fuckers (as always), and the fluids were expensive.

I saw the Rollins Band play many years ago. People were sweating and kicking each other's faces in. Though he paid no attention to the violence, he offered advice as he guzzled in between songs, "Keep water in your bodies". Advice that I'll always remember! In fact, I've smuggled in water to events like this on many occasions. One full bottle in the backpack, and one empty bottle to fill up at the drinking fountain, baby. Security guards are too busy looking for guns to worry about water.

With a zillion people in attendance, and a zillion +1 on the guest list, I couldn't believe that I had found parking and was inside the gate within 15 minutes

The first band I saw was SPANK. They were a tuned down repetitive metal band running their vocals through effects processors. The lyrics were incomprehensible. They were shirtless, wore long baggy shirts, had eyebrow rings, and sported plenty of tattoos They suffered from a poor mix (too much snare and bass), as the soundman was still getting used to things. As I went to fill up my second water bottle, I noticed that the drinking fountain had already turned into a public shower. The bathroom was sweltering hot and smelled like Satan's steam room

LO PRESHER came on next. Another groove metal band, this time from Santa Barbara and not to be confused with the local ska band Low Pressure. They blended woodblock percussion with rap vocals, funky rhythms, and tuned down riffs. Imagine a Caribbean version of Faith No More singing about freedom and stomping on the wah pedal for extended guitar solo jams in the middle. When the singer threw a t-shirt into the crowd, kids nearly elbowed each other to death over it. The blazing sun caused the band's guitars to go out of tune, so I wandered over to check out the main stage for a bit

SUNCHILD followed- the third long-haired band in a row. Was I in the right place? Although the guitar player, Donovan Frankenreiter, is one of the world's fastest and most talented surfers, his band sounds like Crosby Stills and Nash and looks like Lynyrd Skynyrd before the crash. With their psychadelic classic rock hippy vibes, Sunchild would have fit in perfectly at the Monterey Pop Music Festival of 1967 or maybe even at the HORDE tour. 30 seconds into their first song, kids were shaking their heads in disbelief and began emigrating towards the main stage. It just goes to prove that it pays to have a surfer with industry hook-ups in your band if you want to get your band booked on the WARPED tour. After all, it's not how you sound, it's who you know in this business.

photo- William Meadows

Local band, MAN WILL SURRENDER, impressed the shit out of me with their heavy guitar sounds and aggressive vocal melodies. AQUABATS had the crowd revving before they even hit the stage. Their high energy bouncing ska music worked the kids into a frenzy as they started shooting off cap guns. Someone in disguise on stage proclaimed, "I am the professor". They had a much bigger following than some of the 2nd stage acts. AQUABATS already receive plenty of coverage in this publication, so they probably don't need me to bolster them any further. But, I must say that they are positively one of the most entertaining live bands from this region. In "A Pirate Song", they told crazy stories about midget pirates stabbing at their gizzards. Then they quoted Otis Bartholameau from Fluf (as if it were going to be prophetic words of wisdom) with, "How ya' doin?". I could not suppress laughter any further at that point, and yet I think that I was the only one who caught that joke. Gatorade (a corporate sponsor) was giving away no free product that day, so the AQUABATS rallied the crowd into a roar over corporate oppression-just like a hilarious teamsters gathering (only it was more like a scenesters gathering).

photo-Scott W.

SUGAR RAY (who used to called the Shrinky Dinx), from our own Newport Beach, played their hit song "Fly". Their tuned down riffs are a product of Korn-ish angst and the Vandals' sarcastic humor. What began as a hardcore groove band a few years ago has shifted more towards reggae-pop with Sublime textures (particularly with the addition of a DJ and a rapper). The vocals are so much like Brad Nowell's now that it is creepy. SUGAR RAY was obviously the crowd favorite, riding not only on excessive amounts KROQ airplay, but also on their poster boy good looks and charm To their credit, they put on a fab show. But can hardcore be authentic coming from the mouth of a dapper stud in a terrycloth fishing hat who looks like he'll be gracing the cover of DETAILS FOR MEN next month? Anyways, SUGAR RAY's music just keeps getting better and better every time I hear 'em, so more power to them! I'm just totally jealous, and would probably give my little toe (or at least Dan's) to get my band booked on the WARPED TOUR.

photo- William Meadows

Overall, it was a fantastic time and it felt great to be a single heterosexual male with raging summertime hormones. Too bad most of the hot looking little ska-punk girlies in their baby doll tees are off-limits to old perverted Skratch men like myself. We can look, we just can't touch. Where was Johnny Vegas for moral support when you needed him? Buddy, can you spare some ska?

The most impressive show that I saw was Brian Patch, Steve Caballero, Cookiehead Jenkins, Dave Ruen, and Andy MacDonald vert ramp skateboarding in the mid-day heat. True athletes, those guys with their big 540s, lien airs, and all kinds of other shit (I wish I could name them all).

Although I had to leave early, I saw enough LAGWAGON t-shirts to wallpaper the Taj Mahal and enough Manic Panic so that the Velodrome could be identified as a brightly lit geographical feature from space. What really stood out in my mind is that the entire vicinity was littered with flyers within 20 minutes! This disgusting tradition of dumping our shit everywhere for someone else to clean up is highly wasteful and it sets the U.S.A. apart as the undisputed litterbug capital of the Universe. It really defeats the purpose of having non-profit organizations Surfrider Foundation support the WARPED TOUR, so it must stop Remember, if somebody tries to hand you a flyer and you don't want to take it, it's o.k. to say, "No, thank you". Don't take a flyer, read it, and throw it on the ground (as you see your disrespectful little peers doing). The earth is not your fucking toilet, punk. Just ask Zoli. Let's each do our part to make the world a better place for you and me.

San Diego's Blink-182 came to the stage earlier in the day. Every time I see these guys live, they have failed to impress me. This was no exception. They seem sloppy when they play live. I still like it but it kind of sucks. Know what I mean? The best thing about Blink-182 live is that they are funnier than all hell. They often change their lyrics to amuse the crowd. For example, in the song "M&M's" they use the sentences "just want to see her vertical smile" and "There are only so many ways I can make love with my dad." I died laughing. Mark, the bass player, was busy trying to show the crowd his "butt bra".

-andrew baker

Later during the day, a no name band called Limp Bizkit played. I was wondering what band the promoters would have to counter act all this good music that was going on. They were less than enjoyable, quite a lot less. Every song sounded the same. They were a Rage Against the Machine/Korn/Deftones wannabe. One highlight of their show was when the lead singer told the crowd "Fuck you," and then in the same breath said "Thank you" as the Bizkit posse strolled off the muda-fuckin stage Or was it the highlight when they walked off stage? Ahhhh yeah boyee.

-andrew baker and Scott Presant

Bringing their ska wackiness to the Olympic Veledrome was those crazy kids, the Aqua Bats. The Bats threw down the ska with a few old favorites, such as "Idiot Box". The trendy jocks tried to mosh but the Aqua Bats tried to prevent the assurance. The usual fights were performed on stage between the masked man and the Bats, which is getting somewhat old, as well as their other crazy antics. This is the only O.C. ska band that has live shows that are like going to the circus.

As always Reel big Fish, put on one hell of a show, consisting of primarily songs from their album, iTurn the Radio Off". A highlight of their set was "In the Pit", in which the songs bag on the dumb football jocks who were moshing around as the song was being played, I found that amusing. The changed version of "SR" was played, which is about Suburban Rhythm. They could of got a punk rock attitude and played the old school song in which they bag on No Doubt. RBF does not deny their ska background by saying multiple times that they are a ska band and not to mosh to them, which was cool. If you want a chance to hear this band, turn the dial to KROQ, their new single "Sell Out" is on every five minutes.

The Boston ska-core kings, the Bosstones were one of the headlining bands of the Warped. Their set was unbelievably strong as they played some of the old school songs, "Where Did You Go" and "Hell of a Hat". I have just one question, what happened to the plaid? The Eighties favorite, "Someday I Suppose" was performed with excellence. Unfortunately, the majority of the "trendy" crowd left after, "The Impression That I Get", was played. Actually, that was O.K., though because it left more room for the real fans. You have not experienced the Bosstones until you see them live, so check them out.

photo- William Meadows

The overall Warped Tour was put together some what sloppily, there were two hour lines for food, and one hour lines for crappy Gatorade. Although this, the bands were amazing, and the main stages were set up well

-Joe Licavoli

CHITTENDEN GETS WARPED

I absolutely loved Blink-182's first album Cheshire Cat, but it was extremely apparent that the San Diego three piece live is very amateurish and unfocused. I saw them a year ago, and I thought the same; but I thought it was just a bad show for them, but I've come to the conclusion that that's just Blink live. They are now punk enough for all you Billy Joe fanatics (they have a plethora of piercing and tattoos, which don't really seem to fit). However, Blink does have an incredible sense of humor and they changed some of the lyrics which added some levity to their rather unbalanced set.

I had never heard of the Alkoholicks previously and it was no surprise to me when they started their first song. They are a trip-hop rap group, they have a awesome DJ who mixed some phat drum beats and samples together. However, the main focus of their set was to totally glamorize alcohol consumption (with a name like the Alkoholiks what would you expect); I found this to be incredibly stupid and it totally showed how these guys have extremely limited talent and creativity.

Sick Of It All took stage and gave the most powerful set of the day. No matter how many times I see this New York four piece, I am always astounded at their energy level, musician ship and ability to make the crowd move to their hardcore punk. When these guys take the stage you can tell that your going to get a performance with no frills and straight ahead, all out aggression.

photo-Scott W

If you have heard the Vandals release, the Quickening, you have a pretty good idea as to what their live performance is like, except with more cheesy humor, geeky clothes and sloppiness. They are a fun band to watch especially with Warren Fitzgerald's interesting attempts to prove that he really can dance (and monkeys might fly out of my butt).

The headliners for the show were the Epitaph main stays in Pennywise, who delivered a solid set of punk and played songs mainly from the first two albums. The even had some pretty nifty versions of Minor Threat, Black Flag and Sublime songs. Pennywise is a very opinionated band, especially the infamous long haired guitarist Fletcher; he continually put down the bands on the Warped Tour who received radio and MTV support (namely the Mighty Mighty Bosstones and Sugar Ray). I thought this was extremely hypocritical because Pennywise tried going down that same road a few years ago, but it didn't work for them as well (perhaps Fletcher is bitter, boo-hoo!) Despite Fletcher's trash talking, Pennywise was a nice way to end a show that was a far cry from what it was built up to be.

-Jason Chittenden

WARPED TOUR 1997— CONTINUED

RANDOM FLASHES FROM THE WARPED TOUR

By mel torment

All that separated the SKRATCH bunch from the thousands of pierced, tatted and matted skate, skank and thrash fans was this chain link fence. And lots of beefy security types. As we milled about outside the perimeter of the Cal State Domingueze Hills Velodrome, I, unlike Scott Presant, was sorta enjoying the ultra-violet shower while the human circus ebbed and flowed all around

True, Millencolin was already playing, and there was no way to know who was already playing on the third and fourth stages. But, the hell, just cause we weren't on anyone's press list didn't mean we weren't going to weasel in

10 degrees more and two hours later, I found myself deep into the interior of a 45-minuet line to get to the concession stand. Yes I was in, but I could stave off dehydration no longer and this was my fourth attempt to obtain liquids. Two 'o fucking clock and peak broiling hour. Temps topping out at 100+ ."Keep cool, just 10 or 15 others and I'm at the front. No time to freak out now" I keep reminding myself

The same human circus I had observed earlier was now pressing against my sweating flesh. Hell, my sweating flesh; everyone was sweating. Gleaming shaved domes, glistening tats, bad skin and lots of odor... If I could only hold out for 30 minuets more, I would simply buy all the frosty cold bottled water they had. How in the hell could anyone eat those waxy cheese nachos in conditions like this?

At that point Humble Gods hit the fourth stage which was about 150 yards away on a grassy area above the velodrome The two main stages were set at the bottom of the oval shaped, banked concrete bike track which was located below aluminum bleachers Quite the cool set up for a moment. The Vans half pipe was going off all day, and was set at one side of the infield which was alternately packed, and semi-packed all day

Earlier, in-between testing water lines for movement and overall density, Dan and I had been tripping over the in line skaters, bikers and skaters hanging it out big on the half pipe. Just sittin' in the sun, cooking our brains, watching and waiting until someone would bust it out too big

Without a schedule in hand I had no idea who was playing when and where. Nor did I care very much, opting for the random surprise method of wandering into performances. I had already seen the very worthy old school stylings of The Hepcats on the second stage....wow, you talk about a reason to like ska. The understated way that those guys tap directly into the groove shows their understanding and complete devotion to the true roots of the genre. That shit is way cool.

Then, suddenly Sick of It All appeared on the first stage, and excited fans began to stream and funnel their way down to the infield. Hell, I got a little excited too. Unfortunately, the extreme abandon with which the band has won over so many fans did not translate well to this stage. Why is it that for these huge events, the organizers can bring in such huge, expensive sound systems, bring in the best sound men, and still not get a sound which is not bleeding low end bass and bass drum all over the place? I guess because it's still an art and not a science, right?

I want those boys under better conditions, even though the fully red suited Mighty Bosstones sounded just fine on stage (yea...whatever that was worth!). Uhhh, does that really play on the East Coast? Much more cool when Sick of It All, between songs pointed out an 8 year old skater on the half pipe, giving it his mighty best. Everyone roared. That was cool

Events like this are organized in such a way that there is always something going on, kinda like a strategy for limited attention spans. This is cool because it avoids the 70's concert scenario where everyone is stoned and starting to think that Peter Frampton is almost kind of a good guitarist when he plays through that mouth thing just because there's only one giant stage and the dude is on it. So, while the two main stages were alternating with the upper level bands (Reel Big Fish? Blink?!!!), there was plenty of action at the third and fourth stages. Speaking of the band that sells shirts that say "Reel Big Fish Sucks", well, there, we just did.

I worked my way back to the third and fourth stage area....at this point it was 105 and climbing. Dan was turning scarlet and the Scott P. had burrowed his way into the cool soil beneath the Coors Light Truck. It was about this time that I was thinking "water or die. And to die here amongst strangers...." With the Fish bands and the wanky ska and pop crap boring the bejesus out of me I figured it was time to try and find the much-maligned Bluebird.

Instead, I wound up in the afore mentioned line. The Whitekaps had already played (they were the first band I saw). Despite the ridiculously thin sound that would plague everyone on the third stage, the Whitekaps played to a packed area. Was it because K.C. so freely distributING tobacco products to minors, or was it because everyone was mesmerized by the portable disco ball he sported above the crowd? Damn, that bus is a handy little vehicle after all. "Girls in the Pit" was the capper, and of course they obliged, all the while dodging hacky sack balls, Frisbee's and everything else airborne. I reminded myself to keep my head up.

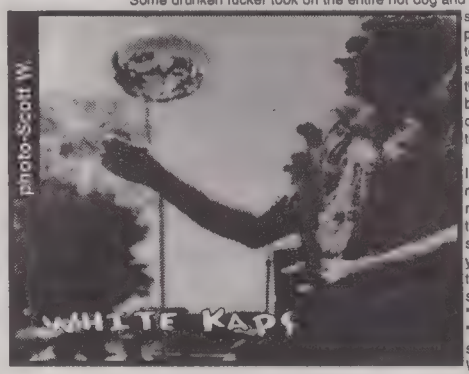
Thinking the WhiteKaps were sounding a bit thin, I then heard the Humble Gods. They definitely are not a thin sounding band, and goddamned if they didn't sound thin as hell. After the Sugar Ray's set, I knew it wasn't the bands on the third stage. The Sugar Ray's went off if you were watching the crowd. They left me dispassionate and bored. Of course I could give a shit if that lame assed song is being played on 107....how weak is that?

Much more satisfying were San Francisco's Cellophane Solution and San Diego's No Knife who played to sparse crowds due to the fact that the Vandals were on the first stage. I caught about 4 minutes of that wack, thinking to myself, "Where is Stevo when we need him?" and headed back to No Knife who played as though there were throngs watching them. Very good stuff indeed

The main stages began to come alive with the Descendants, who held up very well in the bigger than life settings, playing old favorites (I like Food,) All classics and newer shit for the kiddies too young to remember the 80's. The bigger than life Warped Tour was now running on Centrifugal energy as Social D hit the the stage, 98 Mute was causing pandemonium on the third stage, Pennywise warming up before Mike Ness had finished his "before you trust that tatted, mohawked fucker next to you, make sure he wasn't the one throwing apples at you in high school..." admonition.

It was finally getting cooler when Pennywise went off. Strung Out was on the fourth stage playing to a good crowd, even as the densely packed Pennywise infield broke into swirling, pulsating mosh pits. The evening sky was orange and suddenly the evening was warm and nice. The dirty, bloody and exhausted kids from various slams tended their wounds and headed back for one more if they could.

Some drunken fucker took on the entire hot dog and nacho line, thinking that might encourage someone to reopen the beer truck and dispense with more beer past 6:00. The only cool tour bus in the entire lot, (Some of these bands should be ashamed of the fucking rockstar rigs they had lining the parking lot), the WhiteKaps bus worked its way out as a completely worn out Strung Out stopped their set to encourage the crowd to wave bye-bye.



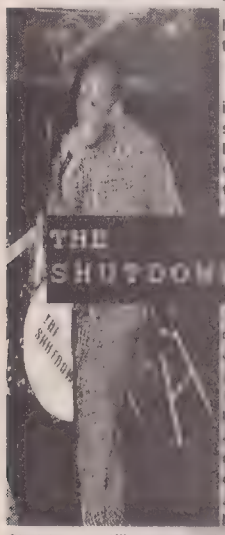
I headed to the infield even as Pennywise mocked the people in back, and proceeded to run off various diatribes about how un-MTV they are, how punk they are, how cool the slamin' folks in front were....yadda, yadda, yadda. Even all that posturing couldn't ruin their show. For as much as I heard the entire stadium singing along to Social Distortions "Mommy's Little Monster" and even more so to "Ball and Chain", Pennywise won the crowd sing along contest with "Bro Hymn". Whatever....what a way to go out.

If this is the future of arena rock and music festivals, the promoters will be stoked, moneyed and filled with self-importance. If this is the future of music on a major league level the fans will be tired, beat up and happy. But if this is the future of Punk Rock, which I know it isn't, I'd quit right now. Still, with some fine-tuning, it all works, and its still better than Arena Rock.

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN, STITCHES, SHUTDOWNS, LUNCHTRUCK

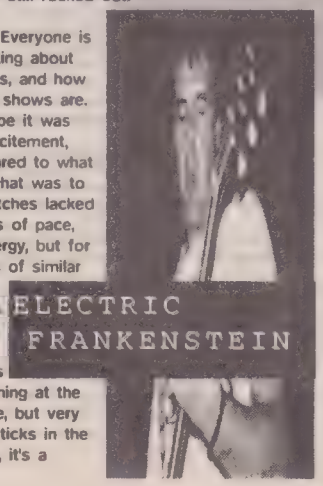
@ CLUB MESA 7/17

Wow, you talk about your show packed months; July was over the top at Club Mesa. Because the Tone Deaf line-up featured NY/NJ punk rockers Electric Frankenstein on a bill featuring a couple of other bands I'd been meaning to see, I chose this Tuesday night to turn out. I mean, I could have gone home & baked in the blue glow of televised crap, but what the fuck....I'd rather rock out to the real deal. So I shot over to the big A and watched the angels kick the crap out of the Texas Rangers, and still had time to get over to Club Mesa.

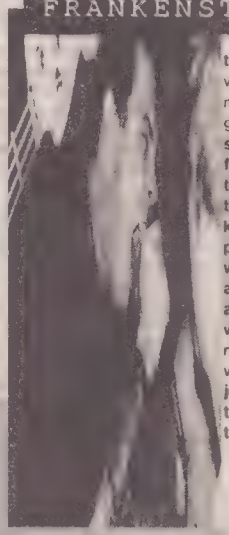


Unluckily, according to well-placed sources, I missed Lunchtruck, so a favor is owed there. I got there as The Shutdowns were carving out a place in everyone's eardrums. Don't know much about these guys, just that I'll probably see them again. The lead singer dude looked like he rolled right from the tanning booth on to stage, but clad in his oh-so-attractive p.j.s, well, let's just say the Shutdowns still rocked out.

Everyone is always talking about the Stitches, and how good their shows are. Hmm, maybe it was just the excitement, but, compared to what was and what was to be, the Stitches lacked punch. Lots of pace, lots of energy, but for what? Lots of similar sounding songs, lots of flailing at the instruments and screaming at the microphone, but very little that sticks in the mind. Hey, it's a crowded field that might require a bit more than a nostalgic nod towards Brita-pop, which I'm not too keen on anyway. Maybe on another night.



Electric Frankenstein, on the other hand, was better than advertised. I got the feeling, as they ripped through a short but very sweet set, that this was the type of excitement that the Stooges or MC5 must have generated in the primeval days. Raw, raucous songs with plenty of punch, chord changes that stir the soul and wreck your ears, and menacing vox which grind at your soul and stare you down up front. This is a much-talked about band, and they left everybody knowing why. Simple, powerful roots rock which is as punk as anything being played at twice the speed. I want more of this monster rock and I want it now. Guess I'll just bide time listening to "Sick Songs" until they get here again.



-mel torment

A BENEFIT FOR AMADOR

7/20/97 @ CLUB MESA

It was a warm Sunny afternoon, and I wondered how many would be truly inspired by even the best of causes to head into Club Mesa to see the bands we had lined up. I had begun to stress even before I would learn that there were line-up changes, bands being added and people with transportation problems. Still, the lineup was solid sporting rockStar Barbecue, Mr. Firley, The Leopard Skin Thugs (formerly the Disrupters), Unit F, Menacing UFO Gangs, No Solution, El Centro, 4-Gazm and The Clones. And the cause was good, with all money going directly to old school barber Amador Corona who has been struggling with Lymphoma.

With the help of Mean Street, all the tattoo vendors and record shops, we managed to get the word out despite blowing through every press release deadline (including SKRATCH). The people showed, and surprisingly, stayed. Rockstar barbecue reminded me of why I like having them on bills, roaring through their version of rock which only occasionally seems like pop. Nah, I take that back. It never sounds like pop. Too fast, too angry, too cool. The show was operating on a positive note, even if it was a bit noisy for the L.A. Times interviews going down.

The highly regarded Mr. Firley took over churning out fully charged punk rock to the appreciative audience. If this were to be a harbinger of things to come it would be more than a solid show. Solid chord changes, melodies, fire and a good attitude. Reasons why Mr. Firley lives up to their street reputations.

Mark Blaster blasted right out of his job into a wife beater T, hit the streets and arrived at Club Mesa just in time to unleash the Leopard Skin Thugs, featuring his new drummer from Bonecrusher. A slow start (for them) soon evolved into the breakneck surf-roots-roar that make the Thugs one of the more intense bands you will ever enjoy. A soundtrack for extreme living, but did Amador have earplugs?

Those boring dotes Unit F were up next, and delivered their typical set fraught with that bug eyed noise, fire blowing, and anal retentive metal parody. Death Pop? What? The only person not thrashing to this diverse grinding alter punk was the mascot, Scrappy, whose fang gapping mohawked baboon skull is secured firmly to a mike stand. That was the first time I've ever seen guitarist Dr. Friendly do the worm and stay in tune, and the first time in a long time that I've seen people doing the Worm.

Menacing UFO Gangs, hailing from Los Angeles courtesy of El Centros Crabbie, assumed the position next, bring an unusual blend of harmonics and heart warming rhythm changes to the stage. The dynamics of this alter-indie band are something else, if not completely original.

Now things were beginning to go as planned and no let down in sight with No Solution bearing down. The boys had gotten primed with the famous Club Mesa giant Mugs-O-Brew, which had them foaming and chomping at the bit. Not to mention the ample fans that were ready to watch these former high Desert heroes bell out the roots punk that taps into the melodic part of your brain in a way that can only leave you stirred. Again and again, No Solution shows why they are primed to make the move to the next level. Far from being some Social D knockoffs, No Solution has its own original stylings, which when played with the intensity that they deliver, make them beyond cool.

The question was, when would the crowd get tired and go thin? Certainly not when El Centro was about to go off. Despite quick runs to Alberto's to mow, people came back and were rewarded with the melodic thrash of one of Newport's finest. Deferring to the insatiable appetite of the crowd, the Gil-Denny-Crabbie show featuring ex-Mulch drummer Mondo and second guitarist Brett Roelen attained an intensity level which required that they play more than "a couple of songs" as promised by Crabbie. Showing no ill effects of just coming off the Warped tour, El Centro reminds me of why there is hope for OC. El Centro played with fire and the same intensity that Crabbie put into making the Benefit a reality.

It was late, but not too late at this point as 4-Gazm took over, sounding better than I had ever heard them sound. Wow, although the mix had been good all night thanks to a road weary Ken Tusky, it sounded absolutely tits (no disrespect girls). Absolutely stunning vocals, churning, hot guitars by L.P., and plenty of solid bass from Jennifer. 4-gazm is much more than just some chicks that rock, they are truly worthy of the attention they garner. This is punk rock with soul, and this night it was intense. And despite what you may not have read in the L.A. Times, 4-gazm did play. Their support of the benefit was crucial to its success.

For the lucky fans that stuck it out to 11:00, the upstart Clones (Ex-Seventeenth Street, Just Plain Big) did more than bring up the rear. The Clones play a heavy, grinding style of punk, which is fast, but doesn't sacrifice punch for speed. The rhythm changes, the raw vox, the driving bass and percussion. You can't help but respect this kind of a sound, if not completely give in to it.

Thanks to all the bands who participated and even to those that tried but could not. Thanks to the fans who turned out, to Craig Mc Gahey and Tone Deaf for making it possible for them to turn out, to Ken Tusky who made everyone sound good, and to Crabbie who inspired the whole worthy cause. Quite the solid show from beginning to end. Where was the drop off in intensity? No where. And in the end, the bands put more than $400.00 in Amador Corona's pocket, enabling him to turn the phone back on and to keep fighting for another day. I mean, we could have paid for a half days salary for some administrator at the American Cancer Society with that contribution, but the direct action means so much more. And, isn't that it what its about anyway?

CHANNEL 6, COOLEY'S MARKET, ACTION LEAGUE, THE LINE, MEALTICKET

-JULY 19 THE BARN, RIVERSIDE

By the time I arrived at The Barn and stood in line for 20 minutes, a man's voice rumbled over the loud speaker "Will Channel 6 please report to the stage." Just then 8 young men were approaching the stage, getting ready to play a set which delighted my ears. Opening up with a song called "Joe's House" which then turned into an exclusive, "1st time ever played live" song called "Mista Pawaful". Throughout the entire set the band proved how to have a good time and make the most out of it.

Despite Bill, the trumpet player's constant dancing on Josh's processor which made the vocals turn into a demonic tune (Channel 99-the devil channel) from time to time, they still managed to play "section 8", "Vegas", "Hate", and "Home" with ease. The surprise of the night was when Neal, formally of Rx Bandits, who came on stage to do guest sax on "Someone/T.V. Life". "T.V. Life" was the choice song of the night with all the little ska kids, who most likely recognized it from the 'Punk vs. Ska' comp..

I must say that everyone in this band shines, and has a lot of character from Josh's energetic vocals, to the bass lines and back-up vocals which belong to that of Erik. The drummer Joevanie, never misses a beat. The horn section: Danny, Shane, and Bill, are always on key. Gary's leads and Greg's rhythmic guitar playing complete this band.

In all my channel 6 shows I have rarely seen a mosh pit, but on this certain night, one erupted half way through their set which ended with "Check it out" I definitely recommend checking out this band, not only are they talented, but they're courteous too. Bill even served some of the audience with glasses of water. Ahhhhh.....

In a haze of fog, Cooley's Market took the stage next. This band is definitely ska-core, but the similarities of Vitamin L also come to mind. Playing a ferocious set which included "Small Man", "Rowe can't tan", "Freakoncito", "Chub Rock", "Mr. Nobody", and ended with a mean version of "Guilty" by Minor Threat. This band from Moreno Valley also jokingly stated "Fuck 98! (posse) Go to the Showcase". Well whatever floats your boat, right?!

photos by Jimbo Gray

Speaking of water.. The night reached havoc when the toilets in the girls bathroom decided to overflow.. so for all of us girls, we were shit out of luck. But up on stage was Action League. This band currently has 3 members who are from the now defunct Suburban Rhythm. There is not too much to say about this Power pop band, except that they are definitely a must see.

Next up was The Line. I, as a writer have to be honest, and I ended up missing their set.

It was a crowded night at The Barn, but finally it was time for the long awaited Mealticket. With her new Pat Benatar hair-do, Genai and co. came on stage to the theme of 'Top Gun'. From then on they played over an hour full of power-packed songs. Starting off their set with "Pop Tart" from the album '13 Apologies' and then a new song off their 7" entitled "Lisa Marie". With Ricky's heavy metal leads and ska cords, they ripped through "Heavy Heart", "Brass Man", "Bliss" "Parachute", "It's Amazing", "No Message" and another new song called "Picture this" which also happens to be a Blondie cover.

In the middle of their set, Genai had a brief conversation with the audience about deodorant, which was brought up because of her black sleeveless shirt.

One disruption of this kick ass show, was when many of the little ska kids decided to act like monkeys and hang from the rafters. Some even thought it was cool to sit on top of them. It was cool until the people of the barn decided to threaten the crowd by saying that if these kids didn't get down, that they would shut down the show! This did not make the audience happy, and so these kids decided they would rather be un-cool and get down, then to deal with a very un-happy crowd.

As they say "the show must go on", and it did! MT then played "Better 1/2", "Super Positive", and "Worried About You", off '13 Apologies'. Off their first album 'Misconceptions', they played " Neanderthal", and "Bus Driver".

After a 16 song set ending with "Ripley", you would think they would have been finished, the crowd did, and so did the band. Until some of the "Superfans" wanted more, and that's what they got! Just then a rockstar encore erupted, and they played "Cosmic Life". Even Genai thought it was very "rockstarish". The kids weren't disappointed and neither was I, this was one hell of a show!

-Jamie Wry

THE OBLIVIONS, THUMP AND NECESSARY EVIL

5/20 AT CLUB MESA

It was a dark, but not a particularly evil evening when I remembered The Texas based Oblivions were playing at Club Mesa. I didn't have to know who in the hell they were with a name like that and a recommendation from Craig. So with my always game brother in town, we went and sure enough, as usually happens when I trust my gut instinct, payoff.

I am the type of guy, who tunes into stations like KXLU in Los Angeles, KSPC in Claremont or KUCI in Irvine precisely because I'll be sure to hear songs I've never heard before by bands I've never known. The kind of bands creating the kind of noise which originates in the underbelly of society. The kind of bands who will never see the light of day at KROQ or any other formatted play list type of station bent on force feeding the masses sanitized pre-approved "hits".

That was the feeling I got on Saturday. That feeling of exploring, of venturing into a club where I might or might not know anyone, on a night when I was only remotely familiar with one of the bands, Thump. Thump, featuring plenty of experience, played after the LA based Necessary Evil opened the night.

Necessary Evil? Well, listen, I didn't even know their name when I was rocking out to this noisy, lurching, psychotic ranting trio, so why would I try to pretend not to like them post-facto? Seriously, Necessary Evil was good in that strange, "I've never heard of these guys before, you?" kind of way. A trio, of two guitars and drums. Unintelligible lyrics which caught my ear. And some damn catchy noise.

Last time I caught Thump, we were all playing the ben-wa ball, that largely forgettable multi-band Monday night experiment at the Rhino Room. And I must admit, the boys have come a long way since then, although that set wasn't that bad either. Thump saws out the kind of pop/punk you might not expect from these veterans, not quite as abrasive as the old China White, but not soft and poppy either. Thump maintains a certain edge to their mood, and the beat is rapid and heavy. Why aren't we seeing more of these guys?

When the same bass drum with the menacing glow skull appeared at the front of the Club Mesa stage for The Oblivions, I wasn't sure if they had borrowed it from Necessary Evil, or vice versa. But it didn't matter anyways, cause, hell, they's all good Austin boys, or some such shit. With the fraternal Texas "howdy 'yall" out of the way, The pschyobilly that is The Oblivions launched into another two guitar and drums assault. Too weird for De Ja Vu, but just enough noise to rock my world with more shit I'd never heard, some of which I even liked.

Goddamn, shoulda took notes, but like the slacker I am, two months late and a page and a half two long, I'll have to rely on a brain battered by years of THC abuse and steeped in psychoactives. Memory? What are the chances? And they wonder why I forget the lyrics to my own songs!

Okay, so dig, The Oblivions finished off the first set of, oh say, eight songs, furious psychobilly, the kind with that slappy back beat, and a sawing guitar which make you think the dude'll have no more skin on his finger tips at the end of the show. Lots of yelling and plenty of greasy assed Texas low-lifed sweatin' ass. Then, followed by the, oh so polite (feint a sweet innocent Texas drawl here) "Why thank-you" after everyone is going nuts, the guys do this rotation thing where guitarist one is now the drummer, two is one, and the drummer is singer and two. Confused? Fuck you!

Groove with' me here. The Oblivions then launch into the next set of between six and eight more psychotic songs about what I'll never fucking know, but, like who cares? The vox change a bit, and I get to see what kind of greasy fucking Texan the drummer is, and, goddamned if the mother can't play some searing fucking leads! Then, okay, everybody rotate again (after the now expected "Why thank-you"s). Dam if there wasn't a lot of action going on for an exploratory Saturday night!

So now I figure this last guy on drums, former guitarist number one, this guy's just sittin in for a couple of songs right? Hell no! The dude is the baddest drummer of them all, and the next four to seven songs are even better the the other two sets! You talk about back breaking beats and the fucking ride from hell-The Oblivions never let up. Better not ever book these guys with the Supersucker! See what happens when you get up off yer ass?

-Torment

DOOM KOUNTY ELECTRIC CHAIR

COCONUT TEASER 1/20

"Playing rock and roll is being able to exude anger without getting arrested."

This was one of many philosophical nuggets that leadsinger Jose Cruz coined in the minutes leading up to doom kounty electric chair's blistering set on a recent night in Hollywood. Packed with loud, fluid melodies and a dose of electric anarchy, doom kounty played some of the most intelligent rock that this music fan has heard anywhere. Stuffed behind those big square pillars at the Coconut Teaszer, the band took the audience on a sonic magic carpet ride that revealed a band who knows exactly what they're doing and why they're doing it. Rock stars with a sense of direction, if you will.

The show was a solddisplay of talent and sheer will. Cruz claims, "If I didn't feel that this (rock 'n roll) was necessary, I would stay home and sleep. But I feel almost a sense of duty about music." And that sense of duty was never more apparent than during songs like "Babykisser", a sweet suicide of a song, with its catchy riffs and percussive assaults. And a damn electric guitar that rocked the house.

Doom kounty is Cruz (lead vocals, guitar), Rob Klonell (drums) and Steve Norton (who took the place of Scott Schriner for the evening on bass and vocals), and each make their presence known, employing solid lines that showed a refreshing dedication to the sound. Cruz's speed guitar work (with this cool, flying V guitar thing) was impressive and exhausting; it conjured up flashbacks of Urge Overkill or even Bauhaus (two of Cruz's favorites, by the way).

And let's not forget to mention the vocal assault on our senses, which wasn't really an assault at all but a seduction. Cruz and Schriner's voices work well together, adding a polished sheen to their already greasy-good sound.

Cruz stated that playing music gives him the "ability to educate people without having to use proper nouns and adjectives", which would lead one to assume he's an illiterate bastard who flunked the third grade. Hah! He is articulate and well-read and a virtual encyclopedia of musical history. This is one smart fucking band. Anyone who can write lyrics like "I'm not about to kiss the hand that wipes the ass that feeds your world" (from "Babykisser") is a literate force to be reckoned with.

Take some time to check out doom kounty electric chair, either live (they play all over the place) or on their new disc "Stealing Defeat From the Jaws of Victory". This is a band that deserves all the rock star excess and privilege they can get.

-Peggy Casey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GOOD OLE SING-ALONG TUNES

PINHEAD CIRCUS
DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SELF INVOLVED
BYO RECORDS

Denver's, Pinhead Circus certainly has the energy, the punk beat and backing vocals to find a place on the respected BYO roster, but after it's all said and done, these speedy thrashers leave me wanting. It really isn't until you get to track 10 of "Detailed Instructions for the Self Involved" that you get any substantial rhythm changes,("A Word"). This is significant because Pinhead Circus comes across as having something to say. Not in an overly political way, but in a more introspective and personal way, and the point of view is slightly interesting. Unfortunately, it gets lost in a barrage of speedy chords which end up being formula. Combined with vox that end up sounding like everyone else with your standard backing vocals, and we have the formula for a punk rock disaster, and that is to end up sounding just like everyone else. So what the fuck, these guys sound like they mean it and could churn out songs like this all day. So if they do, they'll get it sooner or later. In the meantime, it probably plays in the Rocky Mountian region just fine so what the hell. YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN.

-TORMENT

THE ALMIGHTY TRIGGER HAPPY
SHUT UP WHEN...
RAW ENERGY RECORDS

If you take the old school influenced rhythm section of Good Riddance, with the metal/punk influenced guitars of Strung Out and honest to the point lyrics with raw vocals you have the Almighty Trigger Happy. One of the better punk albums that I've heard in some time, they are one of the most seeming meaningful and talented punk bands to release an album this year. I am surprised that this Canadian five piece isn't on Fat Wreck Chords, but I won't be surprised if they are some day soon. The lyrics touch on those who are less fortunate, society's train of thought, insecurity and hatred. Not only are these guys an awesome punk band, they also support Food Not Bombs, so they put their money where there mouth is. You might have to search for this album but believe me you, it is well worth the effort.

-Jason Chittenden

SUPERNOVICE
TIMELY
ONSET RECORDS

The third full length release from pop-rock craftmasters Supernovice, "Timely" again shows the superb writing ability of David Turbow and is an example of what the pop genre can mean. That this band can produce such finely crafted full length works and still not be signed to a major is nothing short of a testament to the ineptitude of the record industry, especially in these times of pop driven radio. No matter however, put your dollars to work locally and be immensely rewarded.

The Pixies, whose ecclectic song writing and diverse sound helped redefine indie rock, have definitely left their mark on young Mr. Turbow and Co. ("Saving Face", "That Ugly Feeling"). Refreshingly, however, Supernovice avoids the knockoff scenario whereby a band becomes bound by its influences, or at least the most obvious ones, and the songs on "Timely" have a feel of their own. Songs such as "Liverwurst" and "Nothing Left" might display some ska tailings which some will take to be dirivative of the current OC scene, but the roots extend well beyond that. Supernovice has plenty of drive which is nicely punched up in the mix, especially when it goes up tempo.

Singer Johnna Corbet, is the most recent member of the band, a special import from BC, Canada, but is it enough Canadian to cut the Canadian Content Formula for airplay up there? Corbets soulful and beautiful voice is well utilized as a backing vocal throughout ("Sick of What Your Standing For"), but she really shines taking over front vox on "Timely". No this album doesn't thrash, and no its not crushingly brutal. Nor does it try, nor should it. Supernovice crafts fine sonic pieces which definitely rock and have an inner weight which make them stand on their own. Pop or Rock? In the end it doesn't matter, because its all rock anyway, and if this is Pop, then we need more of it like this filling the airwaves. RECOMMENDED.

-TORMENT

WITHSTAND
...AND ANGER WAS A WARM PLACE TO HIDE
FIERCE/MAYHEM RECORDS

From New York comes Withstand who are like a cross breed the Victory hardcore sound and Slayer, with vocals that feature a slight hint of rap. Now to some the songs may seem to be almost identical to one another, but for anyone who considers themselves a fan of hardcore/grindcore, they'll discover a smorgasbord of diversity from track to track. The lyrics have a very dissecting tone with hopes of making tomorrow brighter even though today maybe seem bleak. The vocals sung by Roger Zalucky are very similar to Mike Muir of Suicidal Tendencies/Infectious Grooves. The guitar duo of Kevin Maloney and Matt Fallon delivers metal precision and hardcore rage. ...And Anger Was A Warm Place To Hide is an album that combines two styles of music to create a new style all of it's own.

-Jason Chittenden

WILL HAVEN
EL DIABLO
CRISIS/REVALATION

Ten tracks of grinding, punishing songs of desolation, despondence, self-loathing and rage. Sound like your cup of tea? How heavy is heavy? How dark is the darkest night? The end is near, and El Diablo may not be the soundtrack, but it's an indicator. The vox are tortured, similar tract to tract, and in the end fail to carry the message despite all the effort. Still, there are some good things happening with the guitars, between the down-tuning and the fat assed bass lines which crush all within their way, one hears a bit of sonic exploration and some dynamics. Is it enough, perhaps for some. NOT AT THIS TIME, THANK YOU

-TORMENT

SURF BALLISTICS
SELF TITLED
HAYDEN'S FERRY RECORDS

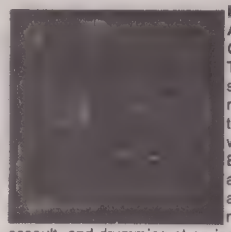
Hailing from beautiful Tempe, Arizona, the Surf Ballistics sound neither surf nor are they ballastic, but they certinly are funky. A little too funky as in Chili Pepper'type rock funk. Low marks for originality (this is the rock & funk house that Anthony and Flea built) but high marks for energy and rhythm. The surf Ballistics are at their best when they lean more towards the Meat Puppets, but even then, those subtle desert chord changes and shifting moods are overwhelmed by the Anthony knock off vox. The best songs are the quiet but much more original "Its Understood" and more sonic "Choices" which showcase the band on its own. "Bough", the last track also makes strides towords creating its own style, and actually suceeds to a degree, showing a more orignial rap and thrash approach, with some ripping leads and chords to boot. The surf Ballistics have the talent and the wherewithall to kick out the jams, but in the end its all too close to both the Meat Puppets and the Chili Peppers. And, after all, isn't it time to move on? RECOMMENDED ONLY FOR THOSE WHO MISS THE PEPPERS AND LOVE THE PUPPETS.

-TORMENT

STEADFAST
SIXTEEN REASONS WHY
ONEFOOT RECORDS

My initial problem with this Connecticut band was the CD packaging which gave me no clue as to what lay inside. While the cover concept of a deforested plain might be a good idea, the downcast cartoon girl smelling a rose in the fore front threw me. As did the lyrics, hard to read over the fold out of more deforestation, but apparently dealing with teenage issues of love lost and who knows what. Had the music been more compelling as opposed to standard formula pop-punk, I may have paid more attention. Considering the current crop of strong issues coming from the East Coast, I must reply to the title, Sixteen Reasons Why, I could not find that many. Still, from the cover photos of the band members, these guys are totally young, and may have a future. Not bad for a first effort, but nothing here stirs the pot. NOT RECOMMENDED.

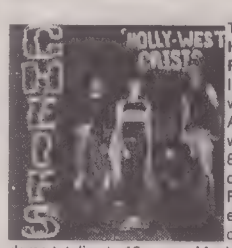
-TORMENT



EMPEROR
ANTHEMS TO THE WELKIN AT DUSK CD
CENTURY MEDIA

The second release from the Norwegian masters of black metal sees them once again innovating the genre that they helped to rebuild. These guys were one of the most well known not just for their church burning antics of their early days, but for redefining the whole black metal genre with their first full-length "In the Nightside Eclipse", which set the standard for many shitty copy cat bands to attempt to imitate, but never match. With "Anthems" they once again re-write the book of metal and unleash a disk that will not be matched for some time. Soaring, chaotic, guitars in a whirlwind assault, and drumming at an incredible speed that shred apart your ears. At times you'll wonder what the fuck they are doing, it's that fast, when the music suddenly breaks into majestic, almost symphonic choruses, sweeping through. I would have liked to have been able to read the lyrics, but Century Media sent a disc in a crappy paper slipcase with just the cover art on it (send me a real one, please!!!!). A monumental disc that will have all the lame ass bands trying to copy? Definitely. A masterpiece.

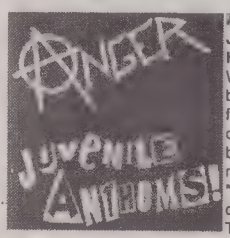
-Maynard send me a disc c/o Skratch Krebs



THE CHEIFS
HOLLY-WEST CRISIS CD
FLIPSIDE REC.

I've been waiting for this sucker to come out for a long time so when Dan gave me a review copy I almost shit my pants with glee. Anyways kiddies the Cheifs (yes, it's supposed to be mis-spelled) were one of L.A.'s unsung punk pioneers from the late 70's early 80ís. They released one classic 7" and appeared on a couple of comps. but were almost forgotten behind their peers Germs, Black Flag, ect. never receiving the recognition they deserved with the exception from die-hard record collectors and old punks. This c.d. collects the bands entire discography as well as an unreleased demo totaling to 13 songs. Musically the Cheifs were your basic punk, using simple structures and straight ahead rhythms. But it was the vocals of Jerry Kozkie, who could have been the vocal inspiration of Milo (Desendents), that gave the band its distinctive sound. Great hard-edged melodies and hooks that still sound as fresh today, as they did when they originally came out. My only bitch being the total absence of any liner notes. With the amount of time it took for this thing to come out you bastards could have least done some, you lazy asses! Still, I dug listening to this, especially hearing "Blues" for the first time in way too many years. If you assholes out there weren't too busy spending your money on the latest piece of shit from a lame ass pop-punk label you should get this and hear what real punk sounded like, way back when.

-Maynard "old school" Krebs



ANGER
JUVENILE ANTHEMS
H.O.A. RECS.

Well the disc is not as bad as the cover art... Anger seem to be a bunch of working class guys who get together and blast some punk for their buddies. And they do it quite well, but due to the sterile production and sometimes too smooth vocals the music gets held back from having any intensity. The band has some bright moments and lyrically attacks with some smart wit on "Funemployment" , "Unscene" and "Sitcom America" , but I just couldn't bypass the clean sound that keeps the music from raging. These guys probably go off live, but this just didnít cut it for me. Sorry guys.

-Maynard "Poser" Krebs

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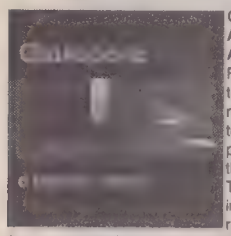
ILL REPUTE
BLEED
THE EDGE RECORDZ

With a world of experience behind them, Ill Repute has once again delivered a potent album with a real sense of musicianship to boot. The Oxnard four piece has been around since the early eighties and has continually delivered the goods from release to release. Ill Repute fit into a vein somewhere between the melody of No Use For A Name and the old school hardcore punk foundation of Good Riddance; it's an infectious combination. The lyrics examine society's mind set, and how the lyricist Tony C. fits into society itself. High points of Bleed include "Dead-End Street," "Clean Cut" and "Roots," not to mention the humorous "Stern For President" and the punkified cover of Tom Petty's "American Girl." So if your looking for an album that has melody with a hardcore punk edge be sure to check out Ill Repute's Bleed, you won't be disappointed.

-Jason Chittenden



CHOKEBORE
A TASTE FOR BITTERS
AMPHETAMINE REPTILE

From the island of Hawaii comes Chokebore, who are an alternative rock band who take a rather untraditional approach to their music. They aren't experimental but they definitely don't have that the restraints of genre formula. But the main question is; do they pull it off? To a certain extent yes they do, however about some of the songs on A Taste For Bitters just don't seem to come together. The lyrics are interesting with their abstract symbolism, especially in "Smaller Steps." The best song on the CD is "Narrow," with it's raw energy and powerful bass line. Chokebore's A Taste For Bitters is not necessarily an album for everybody, but if you are ready for something other than alternative genre junk, then you might want to give this CD a try.

-Jason Chittenden

FLUFFY
HYPERSONIC (E.P.)
THE ENCLAVE

Two of the three songs on this E.P. are radio-friendly pop/rock numbers - enjoyable, but not exceptional. The third song, "Sick Things" is a little darker and more interesting. I'd like to hear more from this band, but hope that it's more exciting than this outing.

-Empty

BLOOMSDAY
S/T E.P.
VELVET BLUE MUSIC

All the music I've heard from Velvet Blue sounds alike. It's lushly produced, harmonic and usually slow-paced. While I appreciate the vocals and lush production on Bloomsday's self-titled E.P., I felt as if I were listening to one long song, rather than five different ones. If the band takes its name from Ulysses, it's ironic, because the novel is famous for the richness and diversity of its characters' voices. Your call.

-Empty

ELEVATE
INTERIOR
HEP-CAT RECORDS

From the U.K. comes Elevate who deliver a very eccentric and peculiar version of Girls Against Boys and Fugazi with a more subtle power pop tinge. Interior is one of those CD's that at first seems like it's very uninteresting, but the more you listen to it, the more the layers of creativity become apparent. Elevate is very good at delivering a distorted sense of pop wisdom but for some their unique brand of pop may be a bit too blurred, their loss.

-Jason Chittenden

THE FEDS
CHICAGO BUREAU
DR. STRANGE RECORDS

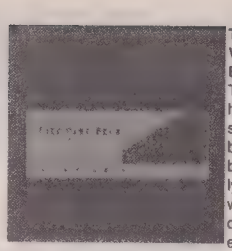
Standard punk riffs a la Vandals, with better than average vocals. Two cuts caught my ear - "Wasted Life" and "Ride it Out". If you KNOW what you like and that's it, try Chicago Bureau out.

-Empty

ARTIFICIAL JOY CLUB
MELT
INTERSCOPE RECORDS

Hailing from Ottawa Canada, the members of ARTIFICIAL JOY CLUB recorded "Melt" in a single room in Los Angeles. The songs are very pretty, and presented in a fashion for all of the world's ears to hear. Of course, the finished product is ultra-polished for Interscope, not only due to Leslie Howe's production, but all the way down to the artistic photo design and layout. "Spaceman" is a very solemn fantasy love song full of dark imagery. In their bio, the female singer, Sal (who sounds a bit like the original dearly beloved alterna-goddess Patti Smith), says she prefers to date guys who are sick and beautiful. Maybe I'll send her a photo of myself along with some of my poetry.

-David Turbow



THEY CAME FROM MASSACHUSETTS
V/A
BIG WHEEL RECREATION

This compilation of nineteen bands from Massachusetts, features hardcore, punk, emo-core, alternative and those who fuse different styles together (Praise the Lord, there's no ska!!!). This one of the better comps that I've had the opportunity to listen to; almost every band on this album delivers something enjoyable. Bands that really leave an impression are Reason Enough; they play hardcore with a nice dose of punk intertwined, somewhat similar to the style of Burn. 454 Big Block; are hardcore with a definite metal influence, the culmination works nicely. Ten Yard Fight; deliver an updated and slightly more hardcore version of Minor Threat. Converge; starts of with really nice soft emo-core, then progresses into driving alternative, then into punk, then last but not least into extremely hard hardcore (their name Converge says it all!). Six Going On Seven; is an emo-core band who's song puts many of the emo-core bands on Revelation to shame. Other good songs are delivered by Automatic Few, Otis, Cast Iron Hike (please see their CD review) and Bane. In other words: this comp is the bomb and I think I'm moving to Massachusetts.

-Jason Chittenden

LEAVING TRAINS
SMOKE FELLOWS BEAUTY
SST RECORDS

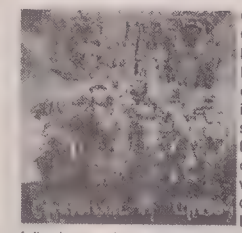
This must be their 3000 release, it is musically boisterous. With many styles of music influencing their original sound, they remind me of the great Alice Donut in many way's. The trains are fond of marijuana seeing that they have several songs dedicated to the mighty reefer. It sure isn't for the knobs still listening to the tired Epitaph bands. I really respect and appreciate bands doing their own thing and that is why I recommend this release for individuals that are tired of the hum-drum rip off bands that fill the shelves of your local record stores.

-Bruce Kolberg

DITCH BANK OKIE
HONK IF YOU'RE ELVIS
ROAD APPLE RECORDS

This punk rock-n-roll band is the coolest shit I've heard in months. I guarantee you'll dig this as much as I do. The lyrics are funny as midget wrestling. They do a Creedence Clearwater Revival cover that rocks, but they do an Elvis Presley Medley that rocks even harder. Most CD's I listen too are ok, but this is killer shit. Get this one, before they're all gone. Chris Paul is a friend of mine, who doesn't listen to anything but Fifteen and Heckle, so when he asked me to make him a copy I knew it was good.

-Bruce Kolberg



GWAR
CARNIVAL OF CHAOS
METAL BLADE RECORDS

Dudes and maggot infested cock teases here's the most cataclysmic rock-n-roll event of all time GWAR. Gwar are the most important collective band of bafoons to ever have been recorded since time began. Their contribution to music is immeasurable, like Mt. Everest is the pinnacle of earthly shit, Gwar are the Mt. Everest of music. If your into music that will make you do things you don't want to do, like kill your girlfriend or even have sex with the family dog, don't be a pussy and obtain this immediately. There is a Beefcake "the mighty" love song for the gals, and if you listen carefully the music sounds like Poison. Also it gives me great pleasure to inform all that Theckno Destructo is back. The proof is in the pudding, Gwar is God. I may go to hell for saying it, but that's for another day. As for the rookies have fun with Fido or Snot if you don't like it, think it's gross, sick, disgusting, or anything else like that, I say this, shut up and lick the cake from my balls. Gwar fans don't care what I say because they'll go and buy it anyway.

-Bruce Golberg

SUMMERCAMP
PURE JUICE
MAVERICK

The best songs on this CD - "Should I Walk Away," and "Play It by Ear" are remniscent of the Beatles and Squeeze (indeed, the vocals are most Squeezelike). On theother hand, Summercamp's songs lack the lyrical and structural originality found in the Beatles and Squeeze. Easy on the ears.

-Empty

THE GERALDINE FIBBERS
BUTCH
VIRGIN RECORDS AMERICA

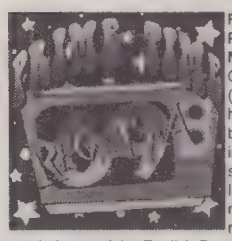
For some reason I could never get into Ethyl Meatplow, and admittedly I was somewhat disappointed the first time I heard the first incarnation of the Geraldine Fibbers at the Rock For Choice Benefit many years ago (with stand up bass and all). My, have they come a long way without losing their abrasive edge! The bass line in "I killed the Cuckoo" could pass for a Jesus Lizard tune and the combination of Jessy and Carla's strained vocals sound almost like Dean Ween on crank. On "Butch", the emotions conveyed cover the entire spectrum from sullen to aggressive. The standout track is the rollicking "Seven or in 10", but The Fibbers are musical throughout. Once again, tunes like "Trashman in Furs" feature viola, violin, and Nels Cline's undoubtedly brilliant guitar work.

-David Turbow

BY THE GRACE OF GOD...
PERSPECTIVE
VICTORY RECORDS

This band is from Louisville, Kentucky, but don't let that stop you. I think the music is the best "hard as fuck" core I've heard all year. The vocals are colossal; they're loud and gnarly. Even though the lyrics sound a little self righteous, like he's on a soapbox tooting his own horn, I still dig it. The straight edge sound and vocal technique are so good that the preachyness of the song content didn't bother me. If you're a fan of real hardcore trust me, it's great. This receives the official stamp of approval from (Naverice) a coalition dedicated to keeping authenticity in punk rock.

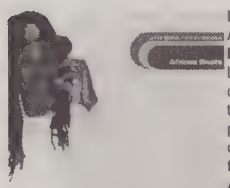
-Bruce Kolberg



REGATTA 69
PRIME TIME
MOON SKA RECORDS

Good Lord! This band rules. The first track off this disc is killer. ("I Wanna Smack You") It combines distorted guitars with rad horns. The vocals are melodic and far from boring. The keyboardist plays most of the main licks. This song portrays impressive musicianship. The rest of the disc is a little bit slower with less distortion but still has dope horn and keyboard lines. "Killer Cabbie" is another song that should not be missed. As far as songs go, Regatta 69 has a lot of diversity, not every song sounds the same. "She Was Looking at Me" reminds me of the English Beat in a way; "Waltz of the Catamaran" has a nice waltz feel and "You Light Up My Life" is a nice slow traditional song. Also look for the hidden live track. Overall, pretty good ska out of North Carolina.

- J. Daniels



LLOYD BREVETT AND THE SKATALITES
AFRICAN ROOTS
MOON SKA RECORDS

Low quality recording and boring repetitious ska is not a good combo. Please, don't operate heavy machinery while listening to this record. You will hurt someone. Every song on here pretty much sounds the same. It is really laid-back ska. The only song that really stands out is "Fugitive". It sounds like a funk tune. It has a faster tempo than the other 13 songs. Another somewhat cool song is "Japan Special". Actually, I can't tell whether I like it or not because the recording is so poor. If you listen to this disc, notice that almost every song starts with a drum fill. Where's my Ritalin?

- J. Daniels

THE ALLSTONIANS
THE ALLSTON BEAT
MOON SKA RECORDS

I had heard many good things about this two tone ska band and I was really looking forward to hearing this album. All I can say is that much to my dismay I was extremely disappointed. It's not necessarily that The Allstonians are bad but rather they are extremely boring; it basically sounds like the same song through out the albums fifty minutes. I almost passed out from boredom while listening to The Allston Beat; simply from it's monotonous nature. So in conclusion if your a major freak of Moon Ska or an insomniac pick up the newest Allstonians album.

-Jason Chittenden

GOB & ANOTHER JOE
ASS SEEN ON TVLAND SPEED
MIGHTY IDY RECORDS

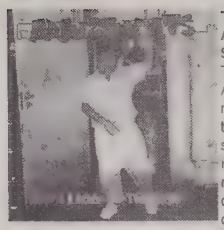
A split full length from two Canadian punk bands, a nice little slice of what Canada has to offer (yes, there is more punk from up north than just Propagandhi). The first half is from Gob who are melodic punk with enough pop sensibility to make them a well rounded punk band. To the punk rock purist Gob may not be too overwhelmingly innovative, but are nonetheless an enjoyable band to listen to. The last half of the album contains eight songs by Another Joe, their name is a bit deceiving. They are step above your average pop-punk band; they are entertaining and actually deliver something in the way of creativity (however, the vocals sung by Jon are almost identical to Fat Mike). Is Canada going to be the next big music scene? Who knows, who cares. All I know is that both Gob & Another Joe are two gems from our friendly neighbors up north.

-Jason Chittenden

LOWERCASE
KILL THE LIGHTS
AMPHETAMINE REPTILE

Kill the Lights is not exactly your average run of the mill album (but then again nothing on Amphetamine Reptile is average) Slow and eerie music coupled with raw raspy vocals is a description that only scratches the surface of the complexity that Lowercase is. At times comparisons between a slower, bizarre version of Fugazi, and a more disturbingly beautiful version of Iceburn could be made. I'm not sure whether the three piece pulls off this unique style or if they are just a bit too eclectic for their own good. Regardless, Lowercase is an acquired taste and should be taken in small doses initially.

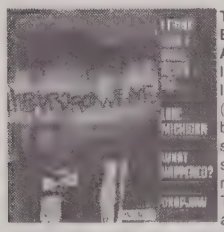
-Jason Chittenden



THE ADJUSTMENTS
A LITTLE TO THE LEFT
STIFF DOG RECORDS

The Adjustments, formerly known as Janitors Against Apartheid, are straight up rad. For starters, the Adjustments do not sound like J.A.A. much only a little bit. I like the songs better. The only thing that I don't like about this disc is it is too short. There are only four songs, and one of them is a Don Henley cover, ("The Boys of Summer"). This CD is mostly punk rock with a little swing mixed in and some melodic guitar introductions. Not one of the four songs is bad with their Henley cover being my favorite. For those people who want to buy this CD because they used to be J.A.A. and think that they will sound like Janitors: they don't, but get it anyway.

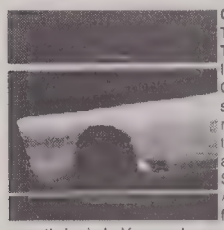
- J. Daniels



THE BROADWAYS
BIG CITY
ASIAN MAN RECORDS

I popped this disc into my player not knowing what to expect. I soon learned that this is Brendan from Slapstick's new band. (Brendan did vocals for Slapstick) But once again the new band does not sound much like it's predecessor. The opening song, actually, "I Think That I Shall Never See" does sound like some of Slapstick's punk stuff. The rest of this 4 song CD does not. The songs are more alternative, emo, and power pop-ish. The vocals are aggressive and rough but they are still enjoyable. The lyrics are very well written. The drums are powerful and well played. The guitar and bass lines are melodic and blend well with the other parts of the band. Nothing on this disc sucks. Also look for the hidden song. The only problem is that is too short. I WANT MORE!!!!

- J. Daniels



COMMANDER VENUS
THE UNEVENTFUL VACATION
THICK RECORDS

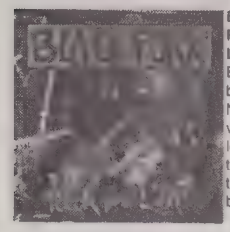
It's always nice to see youngsters employ a DIY ethic. Conor Oberst, the band's founder, singer, guitarist, and songwriter, started up his own indie label, Saddle Creek Records, at the ripe old age of 14. Signed to Thick Records, he's out touring the U.S. right now on his summer vacation between his Junior and Senior Year at high school in Omaha, Nebraska. Stylistically, his band sounds a bit like Superchunk mixed with Archers of Loaf and the songwriting demonstrates a maturity far beyond his years. In classic indie style, the vocals are frequently buried. You can bounce to it nevertheless, and tracks like "Lock n' Chase" are ideal for college radio.

-David Turbow

PEP RALLY
DEADLINE
ONE FOOT RECORDS

Ever wonder what an English band would sound like if they wanted to be on Fat Wreck Chords? Here it is. Musically, the influence of Millencolin is overwhelming, such as the song "Mr. Punk." Just another band playing energetic power punk. Bright spots were "Mr. Punk," "Kinder Surprise" and "Surf God". Lyric wise, pure emo.

-Frank Cardoza



BLACKFORK
ROCK FOR LOOT C.D.
LOOKOUT REC.

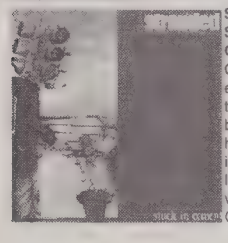
East bay punk rock, that lashes out with little sense of trying to be original and thatis this discs charm. No flashy guitar or NOFX-cloning. Just teen punk angst at its finest. With a female vocalist who sounds like she would kick you in the nuts if you looked at her the wrong way, and no annoying metal overtones. It's good to see Lookout putting out top notch punk from the younger sector of the scene. I hate to make comparisons but they could be the bay area equivalent to DIVISIA.

-Maynard Krebs

V/A
CHECK THIS OUT BABY!
ONEFOOT RECORDS

This 18 band compilation off of New Jersey's own Onefoot Records, features a variety of talent from Horace Pinker, Punkture, Lick 57's, Stoned (?), All You Can Eat, and so much more. This compilation is pretty much generic punk rock. The CD starts off with Crank doing "Lonely Man". It's not a great song but decent. Stoned is next with "Pizza Pete". A good attempt at ska. I think this song was written when these guys had the munchies. You think? Some highlights of this disc are Horace Pinker (reminds me of face to face), Pep Rally, and well, that's about it

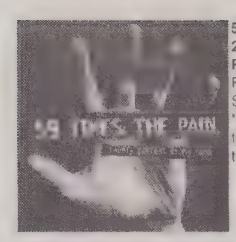
- J. Daniels



STRANDED
STUCK IN CEMENT
ONSET RECORDS

Overall, this CD is not that bad, but then again it's not that good either. the band has a very run of the mill. Every song I listened to it made me say, "Wow this sounds like...(You fill in the blank)".Their vocals sound just like Bad Religion's. The band has some wonderful bass lines throughout the CD. If you're into punk music today then, go out and get Stranded - you'll like it. But if you want to hear something new or something that will take you back to the great sound that started it all, then this CD is not for you. That's it.

-Jon Solomon



59 TIMES THE PAIN
20 PERCENT OF MY HAND
REVELATION RECORDS

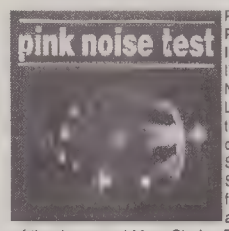
From Sweden comes this hc band with a mix of NYHC, Suicidal Tendencies and Doghouse emo. Songs such as "Can't Change Me," "Too Late" and "Face the Truth" speak to the strength of one's innerself. This is a great hc emo album to add to your collection.

-Frank Cardoza

NO KNIFE
HIT MAN DREAMS
TIME BOMB RECORDINGS

Passed my way by Time Bomb's lovely Elizabeth Armstrong at the Warped Tour, the new NO KNIFE album fucking rocks. It's great to have had the opportunity to watch this band work their way up through the ranks over the years. As usual, there are trippy odd changes in time to punctuate their hard hitting heavy San Diego style riffs. Producer Mark Trombino (Fluf, Drive Like Jehu), has done an excellent job of getting monstrous drum sounds once again. "Hit Man Dreams", the title track, has a surging guitar line and soothing Superchunky vocals. A new recording of one of my favorite No Knife songs, "Sweep Away My Shadow" (which I think originally appeared on a compilation for the IMS, and on a 7" from Goldenrod) is found at the end. 31652 2nd Ave. Laguna Beach, CA 92677.

-David Turbow



PINK NOISE TEST
PLASTICIZED
INTERSCOPE RECORDS

I'm pretty sure that this is the major label debut from Pink Noise Test, a sweetly deranged power pop band led by singer Lawrence Glass and guitarist Kirk Hellie. "Plasticized" is textured thoroughly with vocal loops, feedback, and a healthy dose of guitar noise. If I'm not mistaken, this band hails from Silverlake, CA. But, I can't say for sure because the folks at Skratch quite often hand me CDs without a bio. Anyways, my favorite song was "Echo" with its driving and fuzzy bass line, and vocal harmonies. They remind me of a late '90s version of the Jesus and Mary Chain. The ever-talented Howie Weinberg was chosen to master this one.

-David Turbow

SMASHMOUTH
FUSH YU MANG
INTERSCOPE RECORDS

This is not at all what I expected to hear based on their radio hit "Walkin' On The Sun". Somehow, I figured that they'd be a groovy '60s psychadelic brit pop mod band with organ on all tracks. Not at all, my friends. SMASHMOUTH is more like hook laden catchy punk pop with 2nd wave ska influence. Ample doses of jaded romantic humor are to be found throughout, even on a flamenco flavored tune called "Padrino". Almost all of the songs on "Fush Yu" could qualify as high quality potential radio faves, especially "Nervous in the Alley". The only song that I didn't really dig too much was their cover of "Why Can't We Be Friends?", which is even more repetitive than the original.

-David Turbow

THIS
S/T
FREEDOM CLUB RECORDINGS

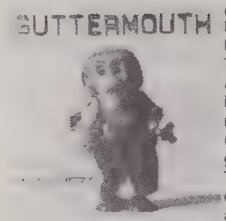
Led by guitarist/lead vocalist Mark Maytorena, THIS is a very talented modern rock band ready for KROQ (playing Zeke's back yard at the Opium Den) and MTV (being slated for airplay on The Real World). The 6 song CD is an effective marketing tool for management agencies in search of a record deal with the majors for artists on their rosters. Mind you, the occasional use of the F-word does not make THIS "punk" by any stretch of the imagination. And there is no way to say this politely, so I'll just say it. THIS's songs sound exactly like a host of many commercial radio monopolizers such as Candlebox, Live ("Zodiac"), Bush ("Weigh"), and Collective Soul ("As Numb As"). Not my cup of tea, but I'm sure they'll go far.

-David Turbow

STRIFE
IN THIS DEFIANCE
VICTORY RECORDS

This is perhaps one of the most anticipated releases of 1997 (it was originally scheduled to be release in January!), but the main question to be answered: Is the new Strife worth the wait? You bet your life it is! In This Defiance is much heavier, darker, harder, and more focused than their debut One Truth (and One Truth is one of the better hardcore Straight Edge albums of all time).These L.A. Straight Edgers show that hardcore is far from being dead, and is still a viable scene for creativity. The rhythm section of 2Sid Niesen (drums) and Chad Petersen (bass) goes from extreme fast hardcore punk to slow driving hardcore in the blink of an eye. The dual guitar attack of Todd and Andrew Kline has metal like distortion with the speed and aggressiveness of hardcore punk. A big hats of goes to Rick Rodney, who's vocal stylings went from screaming to true go for the throat hardcore singing. The album contain a couple Straight Edge anthems, but most of the lyrics talk about how every one of us have to change our ways if we want to see a brighter tomorrow. The art work which appears on the cover and back of the CD is a true wake up call to our Amercian society. In conclusion. In This Defiance is an album which brings hardcore to a new level and only a band such as Strife could accomplish such a feat.

-Jason Chittenden



GUTTERMOUTH
MUSICAL MONKEY
NITRO RECORDS

Topping Guttermouth's past release, *Ten Yakamoto*, Mark Adkins ponders up more topics and themes to poke fun at including just about every genre of music, wanting to be punk rock, rollerblading, painful personal stabs at Dave Liberation ("Musical Monkey"), and many more too hilarious to list. If I gave it all away it would be like ruining a good movie.

Ten years down the road Mark may have a future career in comedy because he's so fricken funny. Hey asshole, what about the music you say? Well, it's more tame than previous albums, more catchy, and unbelievably irresistable song after song. *Musical Monkey* should be left in one place-in your cd player and don't take it out!

-Scott Presant

GRADE
AND SUCH IS PROGRESS C.D.
SECOND NATURE REC.

I must mention the amazing layout on the disc, the graphics are outstanding. Eventhough a bit clique, I was impressed, but alas, I must admit the music is a bit clique as well. Grade is emo, no if ands or buts and the reason I'm generalizing is that the band sticks to such a typical songwriting formula that they leave me with no choice. Quiet parts into loud parts, angst driven octave choruses. The vocalist who screams as if to say, "Hey man, my parents may be putting me through college, but I still can suffer. Feel my pain!!". They do have some moments, "Bedhead" is a moving number from beginning to end, but the cover of "Ziggy Stardust" was highly unnecessary. Hopefully they can stick it out and will be a bit more adventurous on their next offering.

-Maynard "Passion"Krebs

GYMICRAE
STRONG MAN WINS
MENSUAL RECORDS

Musical talent is pretty evident on this cd. Most songs on this cd are catchy and will have you tapping your toes as if you were line dancing. Track one, "Torment" contains raw, whining and emotional vocals. Jimmy can carry a note and scream it even better. The bass line is great on "Lowercase." I love any song entitled "Bitch" (track 3), so naturally I listened with anticipation to the heavy guitar and smooth transitions. And then there's Track 5, "Respect"- this song pumps you up like a helium balloon with fast music, angry lyrics, and great musicianship. It's like the perfect combo burrito. Ole.

-Rachael Easton

STILLSUIT
AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT
TVT/BUILDING RECORDS

Whether or not this is the latest from big apple's Stillsuit (linear notes indicate this was recorded in 1996), doesn't much matter. After their recent show at the Garage in Silverlake, it would be pretty hard to ignore this band.

Given to that heavier pounding sound with discordant and shifting guitars and driving rhythms, Stillsuite falls into that niche of indie rock which squares directly between grindcore and punk. At the speed of light belongs in your CD tower on the same shelf as Stanford Prison Experiment, Orange 9mm, Quicksand and Sick of it All. I like this as much, if not better than a few of those however.

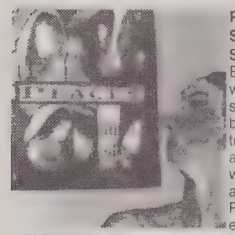
Vocalist Julian Vasquez is coherent, if not urgent and emotive. The fit is good and the energy sufficient to drive these songs and make me care about whatever it is troubling these lads. And whatever it is, it is relentless, not unlike the big city itself.... unending and intense, like some sonic urban communal worry. 14 tracks of relentless bass drive, guitar dynamics to keep you interested, and percussion mixed to rhythmic glory. The production is to be expected from a TVT band, but Stillsuit does not waste its opportunity with filling or fluff. At the Speed of Light stands out in a way which makes me rethink genres. RECOMMENDED.

[TORMENT]

TEDIO BOYS
OUTER SPACE SHIT
ELEVATOR MUSIC

Firstly, I must give props to the perfect album title (see title above-lazy bastard). Aptly named, this disc is different from the usual dust-collecter in one's collection. Perhaps, the sound is out of this world (actually their from Portugal). Incorporating interesting harmonica twangy-distorting guitars, organs, piano, and reverb effects the Boys create their very own 70's like surf-rock-abilly sound reminiscent of none other than Elevator's own prized posession, The Independents. Deserving more recognition, the Tedio Boys refresh the listener with well-crafted mature music only true musicians can play.

-Scott Presant



PEACES
SPEAKING IN TOUNGES
SUICYANIDE RECORDS

Eleven tracks on this self release by the Fullerton Quartet, which falls, barely, into an alt-rock vien mainly because of some interestingly sparse guitar work. I say barely only because Peaces falls back on some standard rock conventions which threaten to send it into retro land (reportedly some airplay on KLOS-oh yea!). Several songs get very thin indeed when the solos arrive, and the payoff is minimal. After all, aren't we past this sort of stanard rock structure yet? Fortunately, there are several tracks here that hint of a talented band ("Rosary Chain" and "Dialog Parade"), and others which actually are good ("Anna Steele") and both the lyrics and vocals are engaging. Almost reminds me of National Peoples Gang in feel, but slightly darker.

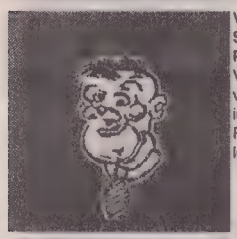
-TORMENT

TANNER
(GERMO)PHOBIC
HEADHUNTER RECORDS
Sad day, I've heard that this is the best release from the San Diego-based three-piece. Although Tanner definitely have the San Diego sound (i.e., Rocket from the Crypt, Drive Like Jehu), I have always felt that they have stuck out from the rest of the bands. Whether it's Gar Wood's unique vocal style or that their music reminds me of the soundtrack for the life of a schizophrenic, (Germo)phobic is no different. Even though it is not as straightforward as their last album, Illgotten Gains, there's everything from start-stop tempo songs to songs you can see your mom tapping her foot to. Tanner does all this and still offers a ton of catchy hooks and punches to make you listen.

-Kelly

LIMP
POP & DISORDERLY
HONEST DON'S FAT FREE RECORDINGS
Super power pop with candy coated choruses that will instantly win over Weezer fans. Similar to most power-pop bands who face the same problem- one dimensional emotions (excluding wonderful bands like locals, Action League). There is an amusing rendition of "Holiday road" here. On first listen Pop & Disorderly was like sweet cotton candy to my ears but by the second I wanted to puke up pink. Uhhhhhh, I'm feelin limp.

-Tomas Espri



VAPORHEAD
S/T
PARADIGM RECORDS
Vaporhead writes amusing songs with a driving beat and sturdy vocals. And, while none of the songs jumped out at me, they are infectiously cheerful. Their press release compares them to the Ramones, but I'd say that the Offspring is a closer bet. So if you like the Offspring, consider picking this one up.

-Empty

GBH
PUNK JUNKIES
TRIPLE XXX
The punk pioneers trash the metalcore of the late eighties and return to their punk roots. Songs like "Junkies" (a cover of the Breakouts), "Impounded" and "Cryin" prove this English band has returned with no wear. For all of the kids who do not remember GBH before the metal years, this would be a perfect album to introduce you to the band. Just for the facts, the band came before the drug.

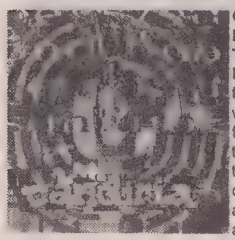
-Frank Cardoza

THE OTHER
HONEST DON'S SNUG FITTING TROUSERS
From the ashes of R.K. L comes the Other. Playing a brand of melodic pop punk on the same side as NOFX, with a bit of metal influence. With songs about the system, Frisco girls, high school and yesteryear. All together, not a great album, not a bad album, not a classic. Just a minor take on the sound of the day.

-Frank Cardoza

V/A
JOINT VENTURES IN SKA
DVS MEDIA
Excellent ska listening with or without a joint. It's hard to believe there is so much to sing about weed, but hell- DVS did it. Showcasing first rate bands like The Scofflaws, The Selecter, The Porkers, Bim Skala Bim, and Magadog separates this 16 track compilation from many others sitting on the current V/A music shelves. A big highlight is Buck O nine's flawless cover of "Pass the Dutchie." Here's a cliche end for a review: Get this album and smoke it up! Peace.

-Scott Presant



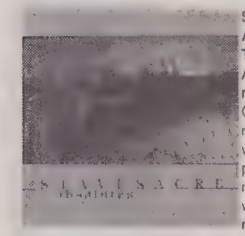
CANDIRIA
BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT
TOO DAMN HYPE RECORDS
I think it would be safe to say that there is no other band on the face of the planet that can pull off what Candiria does and do it well. This is the second full-length album from the four piece from Brooklyn, NY. Try to imagine a more creative Korn meeting the likes of say, fusion-jazz based Chick Corea. I don't know how these guys do it or how to explain it. Beyond Reasonable Doubt offers supertight energetic riffs that pulverize your brain for awhile, then along comes a beautiful jazz passage that sounds as if you put on a different CD. Although the sometimes constant tempo changes and the singer sounding like he just lost a limb might turn off some people, I would recommend this to anyone with a really open mind and in the mood to try something different than the norm.

-Kelly

THE MR. T EXPERIENCE
REVENGE IS SWEET AND SO ARE YOU
LOOKOUT! RECORDS

After releasing eleven albums in as many years, The Mr. T Experience (aka MTX) has one of the most pleasing and creative pop-punk sounds in punk today. In their poppy-punkness, the also include slight hints of rock n' roll, country and even yodeling; which is one of the main reasons that they are a diamond in the rough amongst all of today's generic and mundane punk formula. The vocals of Dr. Frank are melodic and slightly raspy, with lyrics that mainly center around love and loss With songs like."Hell Of Dumb;" a great pop-country-punk song "Lawnmower Of Love;" a wonderfully fun pop-punk romp, and "I Don't Need You Now;" a beautiful little acoustical pop song, MTX demonstrates their reign in the pop-punk scene. Revenge Is Sweet And So Are You arguably proves to be The Mr. T Experience's pinnacle album to date.

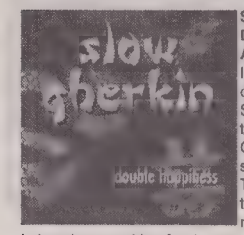
-Jason Chittenden



STAVESACRE
ABSOLUTES
TOOTH & NAIL RECORDS

After seeing these guys at the Tooth & Nail Festival, I wasted no time in buying Stavesacre's latest release Absolutes. The Orange County four piece have been together for approximately three years; in that time they released one album that was far from superb. However, Absolutes has a direction and purpose that seemed to allude Stavesacre until now. They're not exactly hardcore and they're definitely not punk; they are what would happen if Orange 9mm mixed with Tool!, but with much more emotion. A very powerful and potent musical combination, with lyrics that probe the true meaning of life, they're a Christian band that uses multitudes of thought and feeling. With songs fueled by some of the phatest bass lines that the Orange County underground has seen since Focused (what a coincidence the bass player for Focused, Dirk Lemmenes, is also the bass player for Stavesacre). One of the best releases by Tooth & Nail to date and one of the better releases by an O.C. band this year.

-Jason Chittenden



SLOW GHERKIN
DOUBLE HAPPINESS
ASIAN MAN RECORDS

In this day and age where ska has become as generic as any other music scene, all I can say is thank God for bands like Slow Gherkin. They are third wave ska with a slight hint of two tone. Typically I think that almost all ska is identical, but Slow Gherkin stand above the rest of the flock with a smooth and skankable sound (even for a lame white boy such as myself). The lyrics aren't too serious but are nonetheless are entertaining and even funny at times. Songs that stand above the rest are "Bluetelle," which features a old west style piano and lyrics about working for the man and eventually going crazy as a result, and "Thumbs Down To Generation X," which is a fun ska song with lyrics discussing how Generation X is basically buying into the corporate lie. All in all Double Happiness goes down smooth and is a good album for all of those who are growing tired of the ska-punk similarity.

-Jason Chittenden

DROPKICK MURPHYS
BOYS ON THE DOCKS C.D.
CYCLONE REC.

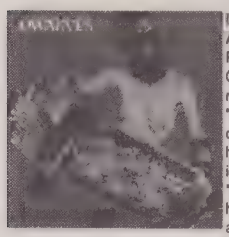
Right now there is no band better at playing authentic street punk/oi in the U.S. than the Dropkick Murphys, if you don't agree with me that's fine, but you suck anyways so listen up. Not since early S. UTTERS has greatness like this been achieved, only shame being that this e.p. only has six songs and should have been an full length instead. Memorable sing along vocals and strong riffs abound with a heavy emphasis on paying homage to COCKSPARRER this disc just plain rocks, pure and simple. Their next disc is gonna be on Hellcat/Epitaph so all you so-called purists can start bitching now (you fucking crybabies) Me,.... I'm gonna crank this baby up and wait.

-Maynard "Hebert" Krebs

THE TIE THAT BINDS
SLOWLY SINKING UNDER
ONE FOOT RECORDS

From the vastness of Texas comes the undeniable talent of The Tie That Binds, who play punk with an emphasis on emotion; in the same vain as Lifetime and Farside. They are melodic but not mundane nor drawn out, musically the five piece sounds as though they are not newcomers to the Emo-core scene; with a combination of varying tempos and true skill. The lyrics are what truly make The Tie That Binds a cut above the rest with their pure emotion and heart felt honesty. If your looking for that "Revelation" sound you won't find it on Slowly Sinking Under, but you will find a band who put the Emo back into Emo-core.

-Jason Chittenden



DWARVES
ARE YOUNG AND GOOD LOOKING CD
RECESS/THEOLOGIAN

O.k., alot of other assholes have reviewed this and ripped this record. FUCK YOU!!!, This record fucking rules. Sure it's no "Blood, Guts, and Pussy" but no one, not even the Dwarves can top that classic and never will. The mighty Blag and Co. have developed into mighty fine songwriters and have even incorporated, dare I say , a bit of melody to their songs with ; "Everybodies Girl" and "One time Only". Then rock the fucking house with the killing spree anthem "We Must Have Blood" and return to their scum rock roots with "Pimp". This disc has something for everybody and still punk as fuck. The perfect soundtrack for perversion.

-Maynard "Pimp" Krebs

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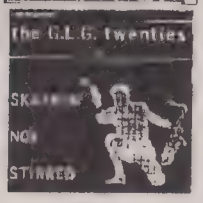

GLG 20S - SKANKIN' NOT STIRRED (7") - TH-003
3 Songs from the blazing ska-core band from Salisbury, MD. ($3.00 PPD)

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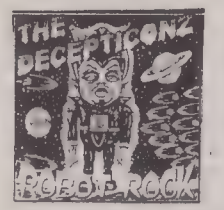

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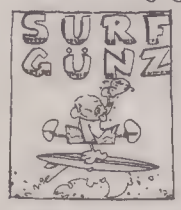

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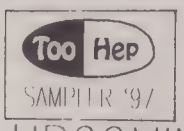

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SUPERMARKET ALL-STARS - (CD? 7"?) - TH-010
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J.R.'s Punk Rock Hit Parade!!!

Greetings, citizens of Earth. This column will be dedicated to the promotion of quality new releases in the world of what I call "roots punk". You might call it "old school punk" or "classic punk".When I talk about roots punk, I'm talking about genres of punk rock that take their primary influence from sounds that were important elements of the first few waves of punk rock in the 70's and 80's- '77 punk, garage and rocknroll, oi/street punk, snotty three-chord punk, 80's style Southern California punk, etc. These styles of punk rock are by no means "retro". They are just as important and vital now as they were 20 or 15 years ago. New bands that keep the classic sound alive and well in the 90's play a huge role in keeping the power and urgency that originally made punk rock great as part of our scene. I don't care about originality or creativity. Perhaps you will be amused that I'm going to go to such great trouble to praise mostly bands who are essentially derivative in nature. But you don't have to break new ground to rock. What I care about is whether or not a band *rocks*. And that's the bottom line!

Here is this month's menu of killer punk rock releases worth checking out:

BLANKS 77- "Tanked And Pogoed" LP

The Blanks are back with a bang, unleashing a CD/LP even more impressive than last year's solid debut full-length"Killer Blanks" was. They unleash 15 songs that toe the line between snotty late 70's Brit punk and explosive early 80's street punk, propelled by Mike Blank's wild, bratty, and often incomprehensible vocals. The tunes themselves are catchier this time out, with a melodic, sing-along quality that could turn just about any kid on to pogo punk. "I Don't Wanna Be", "Suburbia", and "Crash And Burn" are real winners here. This band has a reputation for being one of the top street punk bands around. But they don't just get by on reputation. They deliver the goods, with a sound that is both inspiring and fun. This band has evolved quite a bit over the last few years. Early Blanks 77 fans may feel that the band has taken a turn for the worse with a less-thrashy and more anthemic style. But the newer sound scores big in my book. (Radical Records)

The Eyeliners- "Confidential" CD

I fucking love female-fronted punk bands with roots, and The Eyeliners have some real roots, kids. They dish out 12 tunes on their debut long-player that fuse elements of old school punk, rocknroll, and jangly pop to form a solid, catchy sound that is pretty distinct. This is not your typical "garage rock" band. You cannot pigeonhole The Eyeliners sound. Songs like "Anywhere But Here" and "Won't Be Long" are "pop-punk" in the true sense of the term-combining addictive pop hooks with raw, powerful punk speed and energy. Laura's lead vocals are some of the best you'll hear in today's rocknroll scene- her voice can be lovely and it can be ferocious. Check out "Big Scoop" and "Broke My Heart"- now those tunes are rockers! Imagine if the Go Go's and Avengers met half way- that would be The Eyeliners. (Sympathy For The Record Industry)

Kitty Badass- "385 Seconds Of..." 7"

Speaking of Avengers-influenced bands, Kitty Badass from Conneticut is a band that closely replicates the type of classic sound that band was famous for creating. You'll also hear another classic punk influence in the Kitty B. sound, too. I think that more bands should try to sound like X, one of the greatest 10 bands to ever exist. There are a million bands that rip off The Ramones and Sex Pistols. But why doesn't anyone try to rip off X? Kitty Badass doesn't "rip off" X, but said band *is* a major influence. The lead track, "Make Me" is scathing, powerful, and catchy. It's a brilliant piece of punk rock from a new band that's got an obvious appreciation for the glory days of punk. "How I Spent My Summer Vacation" is X-like to the core, with the dual vocals and all. The B-side cover of the Avengers' "Second To None" is the real highlight on this wonderful slab of vinyl. Jeannie's got so much charisma as a vocalist, and quite a voice to boot! Kitty Badass delivers such a great rendition of this tune! I was stunned! This is one of the 1997's greatest records. Check it out. ($3 to Red Tape Records, 394 Wolcott St., Waterbury, CT 06705)

Dropkick Murphys/ The Bruisers- split 7"

These two east coast street punk bands capture what good oi music is all about on this tag-team blockbuster on Pogo Stick Records. The Dropkick Murphys from Boston are one of the brilliant new punk bands in existence these days. They kick out the jams in an old school Brit-punk manner, dishing out '77-flavored tunes with a street punk feel. They combine the melodic, anthemic sound of bands like Stiff Little Fingers and The Clash with a hard-hitting oi sound that packs a potent punch. Lyrically, their songs are always top-notch odes to the reality of street life. On this release, they do one original and a cover of The Pogues "Billy's Bones". Like everything else they've done so far, both tunes are essential if you like old British punk. New Hampshires' Bruisers are just as formidable on this split, as they deliver two servings of their patented tough-as-nails rocknroll. They even make a Billy Joel song sound good! Awesome! ($3 to Pogo Stick Records, PO Box 354, Midland Park, NJ 07432)

The Mute-Ants- "Rollin' In The Thunder"7"

These guys from Florida are quickly becoming one of the hottest new bands around. Their "James Plays Dress-Up" single on Mutant Pop, released early this year, still stands in my top five for 1997. This new EP, the bands' third, is nearly as good. The Mute-Ants capture the spirit of '77 British punk as well as any band. Their sound is a little different from those great old school bands like the Stitches and U.S. Bombs who do the snotty '77 style with perfection. The Mute-Ants have more of a pop-tinged sound that recalls Generation X, Buzzcocks, Undertones, Rezillos, and other bands that fused perfect pop with punk rock stylings and attitude. The A-side title track is pretty good, but the record really heats up on the B-side, with "Shut Your Face" and "Nightstick" standing out as killer poppy punk tunes with great hooks and great bratty, in-your-face vocals. The world has yet to catch on to the sounds of the Mute-Ants, but it will happen! Now is the time to jump on the Mute-Ants bandwagon. All three of their singles are superb, so get them all! ($3 to Zou Gratz Records, PO Box 812403, Boca Raton, FL 33481)

So there you have it- six damn good punk rock recordings for you to check out. If all goes well, I'll be back in a month or so to hit you with some more goodies. It is my goal to promote the best in roots punk rock, and I'm always looking for new bands who crank out the classic sounds. If any of you out there are in a band or run a label that you think I should know about, drop me a line and fill me in! See ya, punks!

Josh Rutledge, 4827 Old Orchard Rd. York, PA 17402

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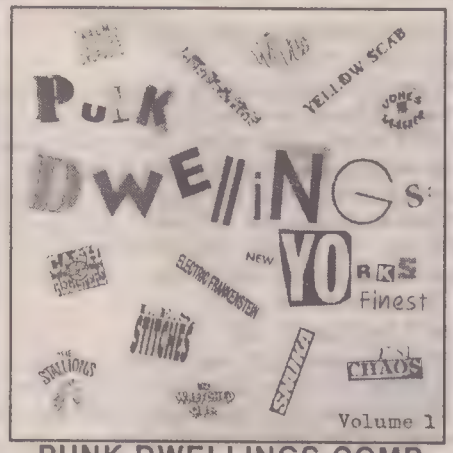

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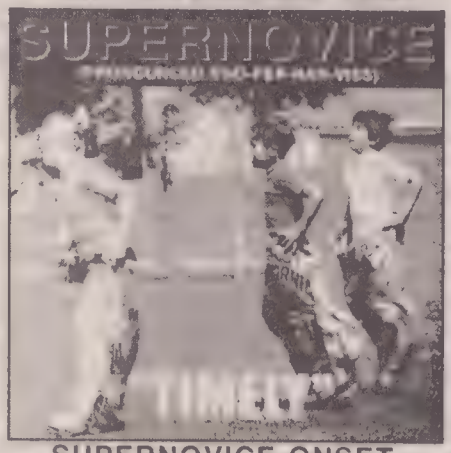

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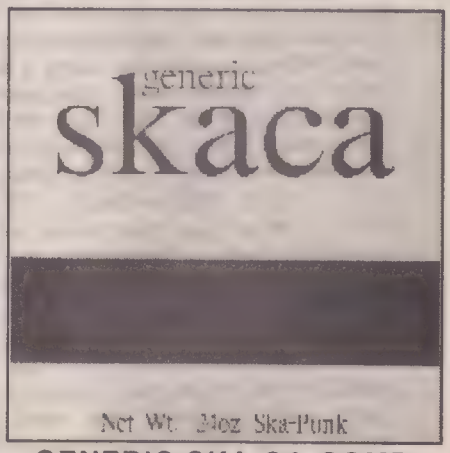

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DEMO-LICIOUS

By David Turbow

THE BLISTERS

A San Marcos based ska band with copious amounts of reggae and dub thrown in, who mostly sing tribute songs to pot (ex. Son of Stonehigh). This demo features songs from their full length CD, Phat Session, containing cool shuffles in rhythm that really start to kick butt in places. 1510 Casa Real Ln. San Marcos, CA 92069.

COWBOY BUDDHA

A nicely packaged and finely self-produced demo of country/roots rock featuring Fletcher Harrington on guitar/vocals, stephen thornton on drums and local sound man Rocky Monge on bass guitar/vocals. This tape is ideal to pop into your tape player for that long road trip out to Austin after your woman has left you out in the cold. The acoustic guitar and twangy vocals on "Rochelle" reminded me of a cross between Neil Young and Mazzy Star. Contact Crab Apple Records (714)641-8633.

DECEPTACONS

Nicely recorded, bratty, fast, formulaic, standard, new school punk beginning on several songs with half time melodic guitar hooks, then a pause, then a switch into the full speed blast beat drumming and chord progressions (ex. "Peewee Vs. the Govt." and "Are We No Longer Friends?"). Sort of tough to make out the lyrics. Matt(714)850-9142

DILLWEED

Another oddball gutterpunk band filled sophomoric humor, and commentary about everything from welfare, bums, indigestion, snowboarding, and Bazooka Bubble Gum. "Taco Bell, Taco Bell, Your(sic) the one I love". There is a New Age passage at the end of the first side. 3462 Garfield St., Carlsbad, CA 92008.

GLITTER

Old school Rock-n'-Roll punk, mixing the American roots of Social D with perhaps a bit of UK influence of the Pistols thrown in for charm. Brash, noisy, three chord tunes are what you can expect on "International Incident". "Wendy is a Riot Girl" is a silly bash on self-empowering women who listen to Hole and Bikini Kill. Similarly, "Slacker" can either be taken as self deprecating humor or an insult to those who sit in their rooms watching the world go by. Feedback galore. Daniel (562)985-1120.

PUNK RODS

These guys make it absolutely clear that they are punk rock. How do I know? (a) They send a ransom note in their press kit to book them, or else (b) their return address on the package is in Hell (c) one member of the band has "PR" branded into his forearm. And if that doesn't convince you, then sample tunes such as "Punk Since I Was Born", or "I Wanna Kill". I couldn't really make out any of the lyrics, but the live photos from Linda's Doll Hut (with the singer covered in blood) are pretty yummy. P.O. Box 70191. Riverside, CA 92513. (909)351-1311.

THE SHAKERZ

Bouncy Cha-cha rhythms and calypso beats from this 5 song live demo will get you on the dance floor immediately. The female lead vocals aren't always perfectly in key and the recording is somewhat lo-fi overall, but that's to be expected for a live demo. I predict that this is one of the most danceable tapes you'll hear in the month of August. (714)283-1869.

SUB-JECTIVE RIGHT

At first listen, I could have sworn that the tape was playing too fast. They are to be commended for producing a recording of pure unadulterated hardcore anger and agression. "Everyday life deals me cards I can't fucking believe", the singer, Scott Luck, yells. My favorite song title, though, was "Phukyew" (spelled alternately as FA-Q on the lyric sheet) commanding, "Suck my dick you mother fuckers, cause your(sic) going down. 1651 West Ave, J-8, Spt. 218, Lancaster, CA 93534.

TRIBUS

Holy Shmackeez! Instrumental Latin jazz/fusion on the danceable side. Not at all what we expect to receive here at Skratch. There is some really impressive bass guitar work done by Carlos Soto on this tape. The whammy bar on Alexis Zabala's guitar solos get a little bit Satriani-ish (or is it Hoey-ish?) in places, but if I could play guitar nearly that well, I would certainly let loose too. Whoever played flute and violin did magnificent jobs (although no credit is given on the j-card). Voyce McGinley's percusion rips, especially on tracks like "Picante". Muy bien! Baila al ritmo, mis amigos! 338 N. New Hampshire #8, L.A., CA 90004. (214)661-4942.

UNIT F

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Reviving the slam pittable aggressive old shool skate/surf punk rock (led by the original purveyors Dead Kennedys, No Means No, D.I.) with guitar solos from Keith Friend on tunes like "You Won't", and yelling rants on songs like "Comic Book Society". (714)638-3464

I, David Turbow. hereby resign from writing DEMO REVIEWS! I have come to the realization that my energy will be better spent on other endeavors such as interviews, CD reviews, and live show reviews (not to mention non-Skratch endeavors-running a record label, playing in a band, and teaching college). I hope that I've been able to help out your bands! Please remember to send 'em straight to SKRATCH headquarters for review from now on!

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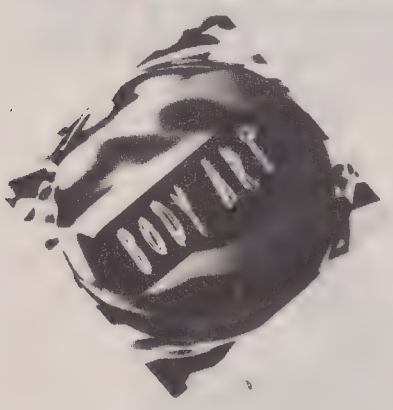
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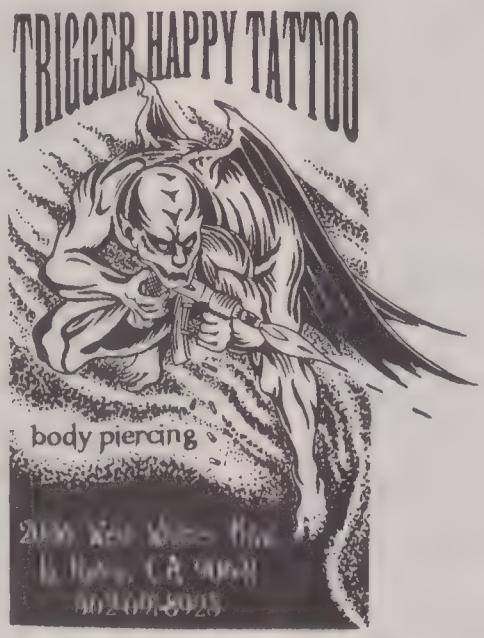
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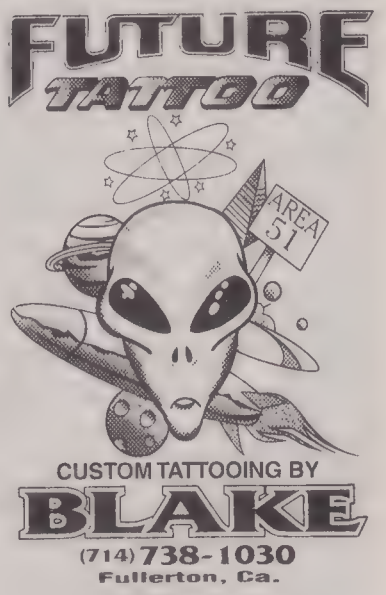
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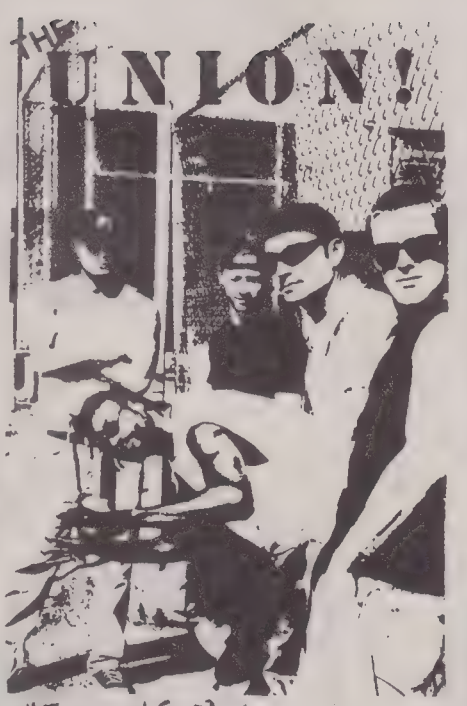

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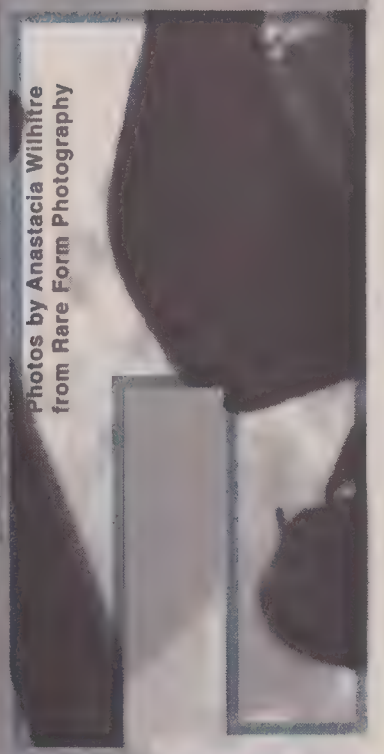


Photos by Anastacia Wilhitre
from Rare Form Photography

I WOULD PERSONALLY LIKE TO APOLOGIZE TO IAN GANT FOR THE MISPRINT OF HIS LAST NAME IN THE JULY 97 ISSUE OF SKRATCH.

YOU SEE, I WAS SMOKING A LOT OF **crack** THAT DAY AND LOST FOCUS. THE ONLY THING IAN GAINS IS MY RESPECT AS HE PERFORMS HIS SKATE MAYHEM AT LIGHTNING SPEED ONLY TO INFLICT SELF-PUNISHMENT IF HE PUMMELS TO THE CONCRETE.

GANT

IN CONCLUSION-PLEASE ADDRESS THIS LITTLE **HELLRAISER** AS IAN GANT AND UNDERSTAND HE'LL SCHOOL YOUR ASS ON A SKATEBOARD.

P.S. TO DAVE AT IN FLIGHT -YOU CAN STOP LAUGHING NOW.

-ANASTACIA WILHITE & RACHAEL EASTON

Photos by Anastacia Wilhite
from Rare Form Photography

IAN GANT

ERIC RICKS

Photos and Interview by Jimbo Gray

erik ricks
22 years old
resides in Hawthorne, CA
boarding for 7 years
sponsors include Acme Skateboards, Standard Truck, PTS shoes, Formula [illegible] Wheels

How has skateboarding affected your life. That is, are you into it for fun or is it (skateboarding) your life?

E: It's kinda like a job, but it's more fun to me. I try not to get too serious because it takes all the fun out of it. That was the reason I started.

Are you influenced by other skaters?

E: I suppose I might see someone do a cool trick but i don't find myself trying to skate just like a particular skater.

Have you won any awards?

I've won some amateur awards, but the closest I've gotten in the pro ranks is, I think- 13th place.

Do you find music to be a big part of (your) skateboarding?

E: Yeah, I definitely listen to music. Probably more than I skate. I still like Nirvana, Local H and I still like the Foo Fighters. But, I also listen to hip-hop sometimes.

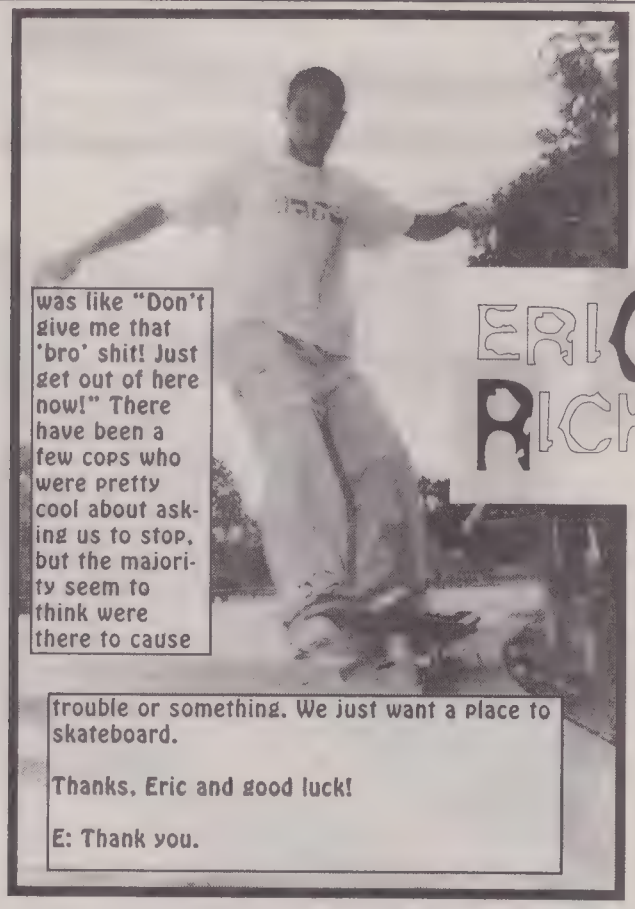
Do you have a ny horror stories or bad wipeouts you would like to share?

E: I have this one story-it's not that bad but--there was this steep hill about 30 feet and you ollie into the bank. As I ollied into it-my foot fell off the nose and I rolled down this steep bank, scratching my nose and arms, which emptied into a sewer. So, I fell into the dirty sewer water. That's about it.

Do you have any recommendations or tips for new skaters?

E: Yeah. Just skate and have fun. Don't do what everyone else is doing because that is how you usually will get noticed-because you're doing your own thing.

what do your parents think about your skateboarding?



ERIC RICKS

was like "Don't give me that 'bro' shit! Just get out of here now!" There have been a few cops who were pretty cool about asking us to stop, but the majority seem to think were there to cause trouble or something. We just want a place to skateboard.

Thanks, Eric and good luck!

E: Thank you.

Photos and Interview by Jimbo Gray

E: My parents bought me a board and didn't know how far it would go, but when I started to travel and get paid -they were pretty happy about it.

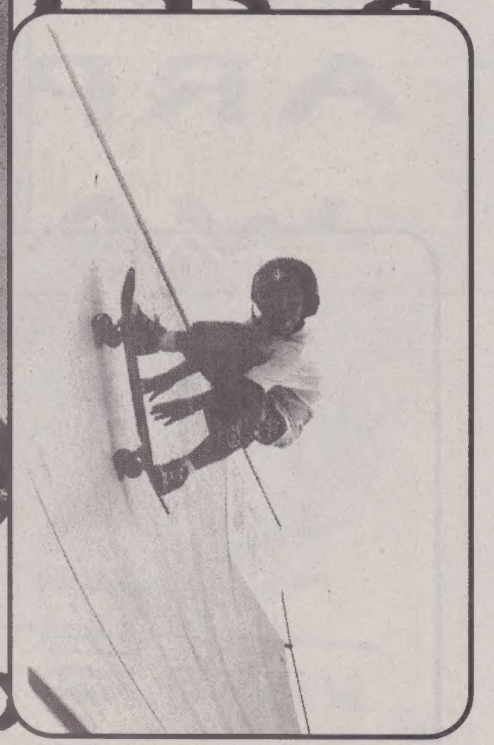
How about Run-ins with the cops?

E: It happens all the time. I don't know if they think we're gonna rob a place or something, but they generally give us a lot of hassle. Just lately a cop comes up slamming on his brakes. He comes charging at us yelling "Get the hell out of here NOW! I'll fucking arrest you! I'll fucking tear your ass right here, right now!" Me and my friends were like "Whatever bro!" He

KYLE ANDERSON

GUY HARDLEY

GUY HARDLEY



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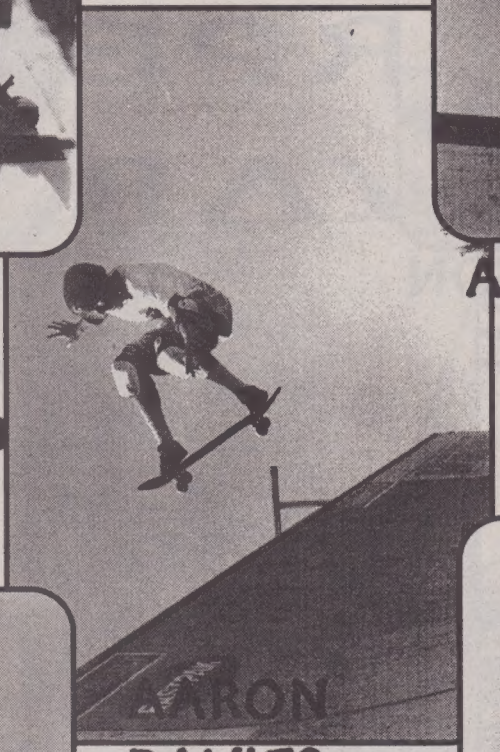

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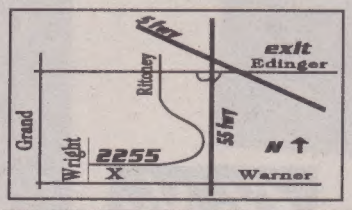

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